

# Comintern 7th World Congress Part 7: The Work of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International

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## The Work of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International

*A Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Active Members of the Moscow Organisation of the C.P.S.U., September 14, 1935*

### INTRODUCTION

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International gathered on the verge of a great change in the lives of peoples, of a change in the relation of forces between the socialist world and the capitalist world, a change in the mutual relations between capitalist states, a change in the disposition of class forces in each country, a change in the world working-class movement and in the liberation movement of all the masses of the toilers.

*In the U.S.S.R., under the leadership of the C.P.S.U., of its Leninist Central Committee, under the leadership of the great leader of the toilers, Comrade Stalin, Socialism has conquered finally and irrevocably.* By strengthening the land of the proletarian dictatorship economically and politically, this victory opens up wide prospects for the further socialist industrialisation of the U.S.S.R. for raising the material and cultural level of the masses to an unprecedented height; it has firmly won vast masses of the people to the side of Socialism, it has strengthened the position of the international proletariat and of all toilers in their struggle against the capitalist offensive, against fascism and against the menace of imperialist war. The victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. is revolutionising the masses of the toilers and is calling into being a mighty movement towards Socialism throughout the capitalist world.

*In the capitalist world, owing to the destructive effects of the world economic crisis, international and internal changes have taken place.* For nearly six years a world economic crisis has been raging which has monstrously increased the exploitation of the working class, has increased the army of unemployed many times, has wrecked millions of peasant farms and has ruined whole countries and nations. It is difficult to express in words the horror of the misfortunes which the crisis has caused the masses of the people. These misfortunes are affecting the posi-

tion of the masses with particular severity at the present time when the social and political consequences of the economic crisis are unfolding to the full.

At the same time, however, changes have been observed in the very development of the world economic crisis. Undoubtedly, *some improvement in the economic situation* has set in compared with 1932, but this improvement is very uneven. There are countries, like Great Britain, Japan, partly Italy, and the Scandinavian countries, where output has exceeded the pre-crisis level of 1929; but there is another type of big country, such as the United States and Germany, where output has only reached 86 to 87 per cent. of pre-crisis level; and, finally, there are countries like France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland, where output is bumping along the lowest crisis level.

Can we, on the basis of these facts, draw the conclusion that the capitalist world has emerged from the state of depression; that the economic crisis is over? No. No such conclusion can be drawn. No such conclusion can be drawn because even in those countries which have exceeded the 1929 level of production symptoms of a fresh outbreak of the crisis are to be observed. If we take 1929 as the highest index of the pre-crisis situation we find that in 1932 world output amounted to 66 per cent. and that in the first half of 1935 it amounted to 86 per cent. The world crisis seems to be *mid-way* between the lowest point of 1932 and the high pre-crisis level of 1929. Although it has abated somewhat, the agrarian crisis is continuing; world foreign trade has dropped to two-thirds of that of 1929; and the financial crisis, although it is not as acute as it has been in past years, is not over. This is not only shown by inflation in Italy and devaluation in Belgium, but also by the menace of devaluation in Germany and in France. The general post-war crisis of capitalism has not subsided, on the contrary, it has become more profound and acute as a result of the world economic crisis.

However, the possibility is not precluded that a further improvement in capitalist economy may take place in the near future. But even if capitalism does succeed in temporarily improving its economic situation, it will not succeed in achieving the relative stabilisation that was ushered in after the first round of wars and revolutions, or in overcoming its general post-war crisis. Capitalism is like a sick man doomed to die; his general state of health is continuously becoming worse, although, at times, the mortally sick man feels a little better.

The general worsening of the position of capitalism is indicated

by the feverish preparations that are being made for an imperialist war. A regrouping of capitalist states has taken place which is reflected in the collapse of the Versailles system and the annulment of the Washington Agreement. The Germany that was the victim of imperialist Versailles, enjoying the sympathy of the world working class, no longer exists; its place is taken by a Germany that is the bulwark of fascist obscurantism and reaction, which, on the bones of the German workers, has established a barbarous regime which is rousing the burning hatred of the toilers of the whole world. Weimar Germany no longer exists; its place has been taken by fascist Germany, which threatens to suppress other nations, which is feverishly arming, which is instigating new imperialist wars, which is furiously preparing for war against the Land of Soviets. France, the principal inspirer of Versailles, France, which for many years led in the preparations for a crusade against the U.S.S.R., is now, after the defeat of the Versailles policy as well as of the policy of intrigue against the U.S.S.R., compelled to co-operate with the U.S.S.R. for the purpose of preserving peace. After the World War the countries of the Little Entente were utilised by French imperialism as a barrier against the international influence of the U.S.S.R.; but now these countries are turning more and more against fascist Germany, which is threatening their independence, and are seeking support of the strengthened Land of Soviets against the aggression of German imperialism. The imperialist countries which are not interested in war to-day cannot, in view of the growing aggression of the imperialist fascist countries—Germany, Japan, and lately Italy—ignore the U.S.S.R. which is the bulwark of peace and of the freedom of nations.

In the Far East, the Washington Agreement, which during the whole of the post-war period determined the relation of forces in the Pacific, has been annulled. By the occupation of Manchuria and her attack on North China, militarist-fascist Japan has started a new partition of the world. Furiously developing her war industries, concentrating military forces in Manchuria and North China and building strategical roads leading to the frontiers of the U.S.S.R., Japan is transforming the territories she has seized from China into a *place d'armes* for an attack upon the Land of Soviets. It is not the League of Nations that is the principal source of imperialist wars, but the states that are withdrawing from it in order that their hands may be free to wage wars of conquest, i.e., Germany and Japan, which have already with-

drawn from the League of Nations, and Italy, which is preparing to withdraw.

Corresponding to the collapse of the Versailles Treaty and the Washington Agreement in the arena of international relations there is a collapse of bourgeois democracy and a growth of the fascist movement in the internal relations of the capitalist states. This coincidence is not accidental, for the maturing of the conditions for imperialist wars are inseparably connected with the growth of political reaction. In Germany, the centre of Europe, fascism came into power and established the most brutal and terroristic regime for the toilers. Germany was followed by the ruling classes of Austria and Spain. In all capitalist countries the fascist attack on the vital interests and elementary rights of the toilers is unfolding. As a result of the world economic crisis the capitalist world has sunk a few steps lower towards suffocating reaction, and it is reviving in the twentieth century the times of the Inquisition, of torture, of the stake and mass assassination.

Under the influence of the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., as a consequence of the economic crisis in the capitalist world, of the war that has started in the Far East and the accession of fascism to power in Central Europe, a growing change is taking place in the temper of the broad masses of the working class, and primarily, among the Social-Democratic workers in the reformist trade unions. This change is materially expressed in the increase in the fighting capacity of the working class for the fight against fascism and war, evidence of which is to be found in the dimensions assumed by the anti-fascist movement in France, and by the armed struggles in Austria and in Spain. This change is also expressed by the powerful movement towards unity of action among all sections of the working class, irrespective of party and trade union affiliation. Although this movement for unity is still only in the initial stage of its development, it will inevitably grow and become strong; the decisions of our Seventh World Congress will help this movement to achieve further successes to an enormous degree.

This change also manifests itself in the crisis in the Second International. We have in mind the political suicide of the German Social-Democratic Party, which, by the policy it pursued, not only paved the way for fascism, but capitulated before it when Hitler came into power, and thus not only showed that it was not a Socialist party, but that it was not even a Democratic party.

We also have in mind the collapse of the next strongest party affiliated to the Second International, viz., the "Left" Social-Democratic Party of Austria, at whose expense there has grown up during the past eighteen months the Communist Party of Austria, which is becoming a mass party, and which, to-day, under the conditions of fascist terror, has a membership of 16,000, compared with the three or four thousand members it had before February 1934.

We also have in mind the growing process of differentiation that is taking place in the ranks of the Social-Democratic parties, the crystallisation in them of a Left-wing, which is more and more sharply opposing the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the leaders of these parties, and is demanding unity of action between the masses of the workers in these parties and the Communists.

Finally, the change in the working-class movement is reflected in the increased political and organisational strength of the Sections of the Communist International. There is hardly a single party in the Communist International which has not doubled or trebled its membership during the past two years. Even those parties which have borne the terrible blows of fascism—for example, the Communist Party of Germany—although their membership has been reduced compared with the period of legality, have nevertheless preserved their broad mass basis in spite of the terror. Fresh strata of workers, who hitherto have been outside of politics altogether, have been drawn into the Communist movement. Not during all the years since the end of the World War and the beginning of the October Revolution have we seen such a movement towards Communism as we have to-day.

Such are the main changes in the international situation and in the working-class movement which determined the fundamental tactical line of the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

What is the essence of the tactical line of the Seventh Congress? The success of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., which has strengthened the positions of the world proletariat in the struggle against capital; the collapse of capitalist stabilisation which has been making the position of the bourgeoisie more and more difficult; the beginning of the transition of the main masses of the working class to the position of the class struggle, and the growing desire of the Social-Democratic workers for a united front with the Communists, are more and more transforming the inter-

national working class into an *effective force* capable of exercising decisive influence on the progress of events in each separate country and in the world arena. The proletariat can no longer be satisfied merely with the propagandist repudiation of capitalism; it must, while relying on the U.S.S.R., pursue a policy of revolutionary activity, which must be profoundly hostile to the notorious policy of "reforming" the capitalist system that was pursued by Social-Democracy, and which transformed the working class into the tail of the bourgeoisie. The policy of revolutionary activity is the policy of weakening the positions of the bourgeoisie, of disrupting its imperialist undertakings, disrupting the attack which it is preparing upon the U.S.S.R., disrupting its attack upon the toilers, its attempt to fascise its dictatorship; it is a policy of *strengthening the positions of the proletariat*. To-day, the internal and external aggression of the bourgeoisie finds its concentrated expression in fascism and war. And in fighting against all forms of bourgeois dictatorship the proletariat must concentrate all its efforts on the struggle against fascism as its bitterest enemy. In fighting against the menace of imperialist war, the proletariat must direct its fire mainly against those states which to-day are the initiators and instigators of war. In this struggle it must take advantage of all the antagonisms within the capitalist camp—the antagonisms among the imperialist powers in the international arena, the antagonisms among the various groups of the bourgeoisie in the home arena; it must utilise all these antagonisms in a *revolutionary manner* and not allow itself to be utilised by the bourgeoisie and thereby weaken its own positions. It must extend the front of possible allies in the fight against fascism and war to those social groups, classes and nations which are not adherents of the proletarian dictatorship, or adherents of the social revolution. And there is no doubt that such a purposeful proletarian policy, the active intervention of the proletariat in the progress of events, will turn towards it those strata of the toilers who, owing to the influence of the barren policy of Social-Democracy, wavered to the side of reaction and ensured the victory of fascism in a number of capitalist countries.

And all this calls for a new orientation on the part of the Communist Parties. They must abandon the old propagandist view that the Communists in the working class are only a militant revolutionary opposition in relation to the mass Social-Democratic Parties and mass trade unions, and that they bear no responsibility for what happens to the working class. It is precisely

because the Social-Democratic reformist policy has gone bankrupt that the Communists now obtain greater opportunities than ever for pursuing the revolutionary policy of the proletariat; at the same time they must take responsibility for the fate of the working-class movement. They cannot be merely organisations for the propaganda of Communist ideas; they must become the most important factor in the political life of their respective countries and of the whole world. By means of the policy of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat they must secure the removal of the last consequences of the defeats which resulted from the policy of Social-Democracy, they must lead the proletariat out of its state of isolation, they must achieve palpable successes in the mass struggle against the capitalist offensive, fascism and war, and prepare the conditions for the final victory of the working class over capitalism. As against the hopelessness and lack of prospects of Social-Democracy they must hold out the effective prospect of struggle and victory; and this prospect will increase the confidence of the working class in its own strength and strengthen its conviction that the present rulers of the capitalist countries are only transient people, that the real master of the world is the proletariat. This is the essence of the decisions of the Seventh Congress.

Let us examine the main line of our Congress in greater detail.

## I. THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE U.S.S.R.

Our Congress was the *Congress of victorious Socialism* in the U.S.S.R.

What does the victory of Socialism imply from the point of view of our internal relations? It marks the beginning of a *new stage* in the development of our country. What are the distinguishing features of this stage? Firstly, that the further development of the productive forces of our socialist economy will proceed, and is already proceeding to an increasing degree, without the enormous difficulties which retarded the growth of socialist economy in the first years of the reconstruction period, quite apart from the period of restoration. The degree of socialist industrialisation already achieved enables our country to overcome the spontaneous elements of the remnants of capitalist economics, and to raise the socialist planning of national economy to a higher stage than it has attained up to now. To-day, it is the *men and women* who are building Socialism who are the decisive force in our progress along the road of new socialist achievements. Stalin's slogan "Cadres decide everything" signifies that leap which, in the words of Engels, our socialist country is taking from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom. And this means that a number of difficulties caused either by objective conditions (the technical-economic backwardness of the country), or by the process of changing the economic system of the small producer, have been left behind. We still have difficulties to face, difficulties arising either out of the necessity of overcoming the survivals of capitalism in economics and in the minds of men, or out of the situation created by the capitalist environment.

Secondly, by the socialist industrialisation of our country we have prepared the conditions for raising the material and cultural level of the masses to a height that is inaccessible to any capitalist country in the world. Concentrating its attention now on *solicitude for people*, our Party and the Soviet government are putting in the forefront the fundamental task of Socialism, the successful fulfilment of which will, in the last analysis, determine the transition to the side of Socialism of vast masses of people.

And if up to now our difficulties, on the one hand, and the inadequately rapid rise of the material level of the masses on the other, slightly retarded the turn of the masses of the toilers towards Socialism, now, in the new stage of our development, the power of attraction of Socialism increases, and Socialism will

more and more rapidly rally to its banner millions of men of labour all over the globe.

Thirdly, the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. has caused enormous social-political changes in our country and has given a great impetus to the building of classless socialist society. By broadening the basis of the proletarian dictatorship, these changes fortify it, and thereby fortify the positions of the international working class in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. These changes have enabled the Workers' and Peasants' Government, by the decisions of the Seventh Congress of Soviets, to extend still further the framework of proletarian democracy and thereby sweep away the prejudices of backward strata in the capitalist countries concerning the proletarian dictatorship. By increasing the social and class homogeneity of the Red Army, these changes increase the power of defence of our country to an enormous degree. Finally, they widen the gulf between socialist society, in which class antagonisms are disappearing more and more, and the capitalist world, where these antagonisms are growing more and more.

In the *sphere of international relations*, the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. weakens the positions of capitalism by increasing the relative proportion of socialist economy to the whole system of world economy. At the same time, by strengthening the proletarian state, this victory transforms the U.S.S.R. into a force of tremendous significance in world politics. The role of the U.S.S.R. as a factor of peace among the nations is growing. The peace policy of the Soviet Union is the policy of the whole of the international proletariat and of all toilers who hate imperialist wars and are fighting against them. Thanks to this policy, the U.S.S.R. is becoming the rallying centre against war for classes, nations, peoples, and states which do not want war and are not interested in it. The role of the U.S.S.R. as the bulwark of the freedom of peoples is growing. All the anti-fascist forces of the world are being instinctively drawn to the U.S.S.R. as the land of the widest proletarian democracy. In those states in which remnants of bourgeois-democratic liberties still remain, the people are turning their gaze towards the U.S.S.R. The peoples who are being crucified by the fascist dictatorship regard the U.S.S.R. as the hearth of their liberties. All the champions of human culture and the foes of fascist barbarism are setting their hopes on the U.S.S.R. The consciousness that there is a land in which the proletariat has created a mighty workers' state is multiplying the forces of the international working class and

serves as a means of increasing its fighting ability. In 1927, Comrade Stalin said that the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. will cause a powerful movement towards Socialism in all the capitalist countries, and that, in this sense, it will not only be the victory of Socialism in a single country, but victory on a world scale. Comrades, we are fortunate in living in the epoch of this growing world movement towards Socialism which neither fascist terror nor war can stem. That is why the resolutions of the Seventh Congress link the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. with the new stage in the development of the proletarian revolution. That is why the prospect of the whole development of the world working-class movement is inseparable from the further victories of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. That is why all the key problems of this movement, all its tactical problems, revolve around the central axis—the reinforcement of the U.S.S.R. as the base of the world proletarian revolution.

## II. THE CONGRESS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM, THE BITTEREST ENEMY OF THE WORKING CLASS

But Socialism in the U.S.S.R., which is becoming stronger day after day, is confronted by decaying capitalism. The state of the proletarian dictatorship in the Land of Soviets is confronted by the states of bourgeois dictatorship in the lands of capitalism. Proletarian democracy is confronted with fascism in its most barbarous form, *viz.*, German National-Socialism. Rallying round the U.S.S.R. as the bulwark of peace and freedom, as the fortress of the world proletarian revolution, the international working class is mobilising its forces against fascism, and primarily, against German fascism, which is the hotbed of war, of unbridled capitalist oppression and bourgeois counter-revolution. The Seventh Congress, the Congress which expressed the burning anti-fascist hatred of the masses of the people, the Congress of the widest mobilisation of the workers, peasants and the small urban artisans, of mobilisation of the nations and peoples suppressed by imperialism, turned its fire mainly against fascism.

Some think that by concentrating our fire mainly against fascism we are relaxing our struggle against the bourgeoisie as a class. This is the same as if one were to assert that by fighting against imperialism we are blunting the hatred of the masses towards the capitalist system. Is it possible to fight successfully against capitalism without intensifying the struggle against fascism? No, it is not; for fascism is more and more becoming the predominant political form of capitalism in the period of its general crisis. There is no humanitarian, democratic capitalism; there is only barbarous reactionary capitalism, fascist capitalism, imperialist capitalism. Is it possible to fight successfully against the bourgeoisie as a class without directing our fire mainly against fascism? No, it is not; for fascism is the open and cynical form of the dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance capital. By disrupting the power of these elements we disrupt the positions of the bourgeoisie as a class, for the bourgeoisie as a class is bound by inseparable bonds with the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital.

Some think that in raising the question of a united front between Communists and Social-Democrats for the struggle against fascism, we are revising Lenin's description of the role of Social-Democracy as the principal social bulwark of the bourgeoisie, and that we are abandoning Stalin's thesis that the fascists and Social-Democrats are not opposites, but twins. Is that

the case? If Social-Democracy in Germany and in Austria were not the principal bulwark of the bourgeoisie but the opposites of fascism, fascism would not have come into power either in Germany or in Austria. But ceasing to be the social bulwark of the bourgeoisie, becoming the opposite of fascism, would have meant, not systematically retreating and capitulating before fascism, but fighting it, not directing one's blows against the Communists when fascism attacked the working class, but establishing a fighting alliance with the Communists for the purpose of fighting fascism. By its whole policy of class collaboration, which paved the road to fascism, Social-Democracy demonstrated the truth of the theses that it is not the opposite but the twin of fascism. By its whole policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie, which helped to cause the masses to become disappointed with bourgeois democracy and created favourable conditions for the development of the fascist movement, Social-Democracy confirmed the truth of Lenin's description of it as the principal social bulwark of the bourgeoisie. It is precisely because it was the *twin* of fascism and the *principal social bulwark of the bourgeoisie* that it led the masses of the workers to defeat in Central Europe and helped the advance of fascist reaction all over the world. Thanks to this policy of systematically retreating before fascism, Social-Democracy placed itself in the position of a hounded and persecuted party in Austria and in Germany; thanks to this policy, hundreds of thousands of Social-Democratic workers and their organisations are now outlawed. It is precisely because of this that the working class, not only in Austria and Germany, but in all capitalist countries, is beginning to reject the policy of the Social-Democratic twins and to adopt the policy of the "opposite" of fascism. This is why they demand that Social-Democracy shall cease to be the principal social bulwark of the bourgeoisie. This is the significance of the united front movement that is developing all over the world.

And the Communists would be mere doctrinaires and not revolutionaries if they failed to take into account the changes that are taking place in the ranks of the working class and in the Social-Democratic Parties, if they did not, by means of united front tactics, help the best sections of these parties, and the masses which follow them, to find the path towards the fighting policy of the opposites of fascism, and to stop the bourgeoisie from utilising the Social-Democratic Parties as its social bulwark. It is precisely because fascism is the point upon which is concentrated all the hatred for capitalism, that has accumulated in the ranks of

the working class and the toilers for centuries, that we Communists are now making it the main target of the militant activities of the working class. And in acting in this way we do not push our struggle against other forms of bourgeois dictatorship into the background; on the contrary, by mobilising the masses against fascism we are preparing for the collapse of capitalism and of all forms of bourgeois dictatorship.

"Nevertheless, in acting in this way, the Comintern is departing from its previous attitude towards bourgeois democracy"—say the Social-Democrats. "Formerly, you were opponents of bourgeois democracy, now you are becoming its champions." Is that true? No, comrades, it is not true. We Communists have never unreservedly championed bourgeois democracy as the Social-Democratic leaders have done, nor have we unreservedly opposed it as the anarchists do.

We approached the question of bourgeois democracy as subscribers to revolutionary dialectics, as the disciples of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. For example, during the German Revolution (1918-19), when the struggle raged around the question of whether Germany was to be a bourgeois republic or a Soviet republic, when Noske was shooting down the workers on the pretext of protecting the bourgeois republic, at that time, bourgeois democracy was the banner around which all the counter-revolutionary forces of Germany rallied. The position was the same in regard to the Constituent Assembly slogan immediately after our October Revolution. A Constituent Assembly would have been a step backward compared with the Soviet power; it would have been a decisive stage on the road towards the restoration of capitalism in our country. That is why the Bolsheviks dispersed the Constituent Assembly, that is why the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the followers of Kolchak and Denikin, rallied around it. To have come out in defence of bourgeois democracy under such circumstances would have been tantamount to defending the bourgeois counter-revolution against the proletarian revolution.

The situation is different to-day. To-day, the proletariat in most capitalist countries are not confronted with the alternative of bourgeois democracy or proletarian democracy; they are confronted with the alternative of bourgeois democracy or fascism. To-day, the slogan, bourgeois democracy, is a step forward compared with fascism. To-day, the slogan of the struggle against fascism can serve to rally far wider strata to the movement than the slogan of direct struggle for the proletarian dictatorship.

Therefore, the Communists are absolutely right when, in a number of fascist countries, or in countries which are becoming fascist, they put forward the demand for the convocation of a National Constituent Assembly in order to mobilise the masses against fascism.

But the Communists would have committed a crime against the working class had they adopted this attitude towards bourgeois democracy, not only in the period of revolution, but even in the period of capitalist stabilisation, when bourgeois democracy was not directly menaced with the fascist danger, when it, and not fascism, was the principal form of social reaction, when the bourgeoisie exercised its rule, not by means of fascism, but by means of bourgeois democracy. In such a period the working class fights against a Weimar Republic, not because it is a republic, but because it is a bourgeois republic which suppresses the strikes of the working class, which, by the hand of the Zörgiebels, shoots down workers' demonstrations, dissolves anti-fascist organisations like the League of Red Front Fighters, and throws revolutionary workers into jail.

However, neither the Communists nor the working class of Germany could adopt this negative attitude towards the Weimar Republic when the fascist movement began to grow very rapidly, and when the danger of the fascists seizing power began to loom ahead. And if to-day we were to criticise the position taken up by our brother Party in Germany, it would be precisely on the point that it was belated in changing front in relation to the Weimar Republic, and continued to repeat its old arguments after the situation had changed.

The Social-Democrats say: "Since the Communists prefer bourgeois democracy to fascism, they, too, are becoming adherents of the 'lesser evil' policy." Yes, we Communists prefer the "lesser evil" to the greater evil. It is not this that separates us from Social-Democracy. We exposed the Social-Democratic "lesser evil" policy because that policy meant *the betrayal of bourgeois democracy and directly helping fascism*. Recall what the position of German Social-Democracy was in the period of the Brüning government, the government which paved the way for the accession to power of fascism. This government issued decrees reducing wages, curtailing the political rights of the workers and fascising the Weimar Republic. In pursuit of their "lesser evil" policy the German Social-Democrats supported these decrees. Was the same line of conduct maintained by the French Communists and Socialists in relation to the French

Brüning—the government of Doumergue? No, they fought against the issue of similar decrees in France; and in their united front struggle they secured the overthrow of the Doumergue government and inflicted defeat upon the French bourgeoisie. The German Social-Democrats entered into a *bloc* with Brüning against the Communists, whereas the Socialist and Communist workers in France formed a *bloc* against Doumergue. That is the difference.

In face of fascist violence the German Social-Democrats demoralised the masses by appealing to them to adhere to legality and thereby did not protect bourgeois democracy but threw it into the jaws of fascism; whereas the French Communists, while not abandoning parliamentary methods of struggle, put extra-parliamentary methods of struggle in the forefront, and thereby actually protected bourgeois democracy and inflicted defeat upon fascism. That is why we have different results in France from those we have in Germany.

### III. A CONGRESS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR, FOR PEACE AND THE DEFENCE OF THE U.S.S.R.

But the international working class has reasons connected with international politics for concentrating all the weight of its blows upon fascism. All modern, large, capitalist states, fascist as well as bourgeois democratic, are imperialist states; but the most aggressive imperialist policy is being pursued by the fascist governments which cynically trample upon all treaties and carry into the sphere of international relations the gangster methods they employ in their home politics.

The growing menace of world imperialist war is causing all class, national and state forces to separate into two camps: *the camp of war and the camp of peace*. The *centre of the forces* which are operating to bring about war, to accelerate its outbreak, is *fascism*: in Europe the most reactionary and aggressive form of fascism exists in Hitler's Germany; in Asia, it is in militarist-fascist Japan. Never have the masses of the people, the workers, the peasants, the urban artisans, all honest adherents of peace, so acutely sensed the fact that fascism means war, as they do at the present time. Germany is now threatening all her neighbours and is striving to achieve hegemony in Europe. Japan, which proclaims that Japanese imperialism has a special mission in Asia, is already waging war in China. Both Germany and Japan turn the spearhead of their aggression against the U.S.S.R. Italy stands fully armed on the frontiers of Abyssinia and is trying to strengthen her position in the Mediterranean.

The *centre of the forces* which are fighting against war and its instigators is the U.S.S.R., which is rallying around itself not only the international proletariat, but all other classes as well as all weak nations and peoples who do not want war.

Under these circumstances, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International did not declare that all capitalist states are *equally responsible* for unleashing imperialist war; it *concentrated its blows* against the fascist instigators of war, against Germany, Japan and Italy.

It may be asked: Is not this line adopted by the Seventh Congress similar to the position of those who during the first imperialist war searched in blue, white, yellow and other books for the "principal culprit" for the war which had broken out, whereas, in fact, all the imperialist participants in that war were collectively and equally responsible for it? But it is absurd to compare the situation on the outbreak of the world imperialist

war in 1914 with the present situation. To-day, the U.S.S.R. exists, the land of victorious Socialism, which has fundamentally changed the direction of imperialist antagonisms. To-day, the fundamental division of the world into the world of Socialism and the world of capitalism is the main world antagonism. To-day, the world proletariat has something to defend. It has its own proletarian state to defend. On the other hand, to-day, fascism exists, the most furious form of bourgeois reaction and imperialist aggression, which threatens to enslave its own and foreign people, and which is directed against the U.S.S.R. as the land of victorious Socialism. Neither of these things existed in the period of the first world imperialist war. How is it possible to establish abstract "equality" in the approach to the menace of imperialist war to-day with that in 1914? To-day, the *defence of the U.S.S.R.* determines the main line of policy of the world proletariat in relation to war; whereas in 1914, the best proletarian revolutionaries adopted the position of defeat of one's imperialist government in the war. To-day, the position of fighting against Germany, Japan and Italy as the instigators of world war is a genuinely revolutionary position; it is in the interests of the international proletariat in the interests of preserving peace between the peoples. In 1914, however, the "culprit" theory served as a cloak to conceal the imperialist aims of one's bourgeoisie. To-day, for the purpose of fighting for peace, an *extremely concrete* approach must be adopted towards the positions of the various countries in accordance with the regrouping of forces that has taken place in the camp of the capitalist states.

The old criterion which we used in testing the relations between capitalist states in the period when the Versailles system was established is now useless. That is why the question of our attitude toward the League of Nations stands differently to-day.

Undoubtedly, the League of Nations bears full responsibility for the situation which has now arisen in the capitalist world. The League of Nations, as the vehicle of the Versailles system, fostered German fascism and led to the danger of a new imperialist war.

But now that the Versailles system is collapsing the role of the League of Nations as the instrument of the Versailles policy is greatly diminishing. The withdrawal of the two most aggressive fascist states, Germany and Japan, from the League of Nations, and the fact that the U.S.S.R. has joined it, change the character of the League of Nations. The possibility is created of opposing the capitalist states which belong to the League of Nations to the

fascist instigators of war; the possibility is created of utilising the League of Nations in the interests of preserving peace. In the same way as the masses by their demonstrations in their respective countries bring pressure to bear upon their respective parliaments in order to compel them to adopt this or that measure, it is possible for the masses to bring pressure to bear upon the League of Nations in order to secure the preservation of peace in the sphere of international relations.

On the basis of a similarly concrete approach to the role of the various states, the Congress adopted an extremely important decision on the question of defending small nations and weak states whose independence is threatened by fascist aggression. It would be wrong to put the small nations on the same level as the big predatory imperialists on the plea that both are capitalist states. That is why the Seventh Congress proclaimed for small nations and weak states "the right to defend their national independence" against the attacks of big imperialist powers. It strongly emphasised the fact that a war waged by the national bourgeoisie of such a country against an imperialist invader may assume a *national liberation character*, and that it is the duty of the Communists in such a case actively to intervene in the armed struggle for national independence, to take their place in the front ranks of this struggle, and to do everything to facilitate the defeat of the imperialist enemy. In this, however, the Communists must, firstly, strive to transform the war for national independence into a *genuine people's war*, on the model of the Chinese Soviets; they must strive to secure the arming of the whole people in order that the war may be waged in a Jacobin, in a revolutionary manner.

Secondly, in order to enlist the whole of the toiling people for the really wide and effective revolutionary defence of their country against the imperialist enemy, the Communists must fight with all their might *for the extension of the democratic rights and liberties of the masses of the people, they must fight to strengthen the economic positions of the workers, the peasants and the whole of the toiling population and for complete and genuine equality of rights for the national minorities*. Unless this condition is fulfilled victory in the national war will be impossible.

And thirdly, the Communists will have to call upon the whole people to *watch their bourgeoisie vigilantly and to organise the masses of the toilers against the betrayers of the country and the people*. The Communists must not attack the national bour-

geoisie because they are waging war, but because they are not waging it with sufficient determination and energy, because they are waging it with useless capitalist weapons, and, in fear of the masses of the people, are striving to strike a bargain with the imperialist enemy.

Not only is "equality" inappropriate in approaching the specific features in the position of each separate country; it is also inappropriate in the tactics of the Communist Parties which are operating in entirely different circumstances. To-day, the tactics of the Communist Party which is in power and the tactics of the Communist Parties which are only just marching towards the conquest of power by the working class need not always be the same; whereas in 1914, when the U.S.S.R. did not yet exist, defeatism was the obligatory tactics for proletarian revolutionaries in all belligerent countries.

In his report to the Seventh Congress, Comrade Ercoli showed that the position of the Communist Party in power in the land of the proletarian dictatorship, and the position of the Communists who are organising the working class for the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, might not coincide.

Comrades, you will remember that recently the bourgeoisie, and following them, the Socialists, thought they had discovered a "contradiction" between what Comrade Stalin said in his conversation with Laval and the position of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries, particularly that of the Communist Party of France, which votes against military credits, against the war measures of "its" bourgeoisie. The bourgeois and Socialist press gloatingly asserted that Comrade Stalin's statement, which served the cause of peace among nations, would not be understood by the French proletariat.

How did the masses of the toilers, and primarily, the workers of France, reply to this assertion? Did they understand that the U.S.S.R.'s peace policy is directed against fascist aggression and serves the interests of all nations, serves to strengthen the positions of the proletariat? Ten days after the publication of the report of Comrade Stalin's conversation with Laval, the municipal elections took place in Paris and its environs. The French working class and the broad masses of the toilers replied with an increased vote for the Communists exceeding all expectations. By their vote, the toilers of France emphasised the fact that they fully approve of the peace policy pursued by the Soviet proletariat, and that they understand perfectly the difference between its position and the position of the French Communists.

What is the position of the French Communists?

The French proletariat is vitally interested in the strictest observance of the Franco-Soviet agreement, which serves the interests of universal peace against the fascist instigators of war. But the French proletariat and the French Communists have not concluded any agreement with "their" bourgeoisie. At any moment the French bourgeoisie may try to move its army against the working class. This army not only serves the purpose of defending France against German fascism; it also serves the imperialist aims of suppressing colonial peoples. Among the French officers there are not a few fascist elements who are dreaming about a fascist *coup d'état* in the country, and who are striving to come to an agreement with the German fascists at the expense of the people of France. That is why the French Communists declare that they will vote against military credits and against all the military measures of the French bourgeoisie. Simultaneously, they expose and will unyieldingly expose to the broad masses of the people the wavering and vacillation of the fascist and semi-fascist bourgeois politicians who are trying to come to an understanding with German fascism.

And here, comrades, is another example which shows that the party in power occupies a special position; and failure to understand this may lead to a host of mistakes being committed when working out the tactical line. I refer to the slogan of boycotting Italy in connection with the Italo-Abyssinian conflict.

The Second and Amsterdam Internationals are calling upon the League of Nations to apply sanctions to fascist Italy as the disturber of peace. But can they guarantee that all the states which belong to the League of Nations will *really collectively, really conscientiously*, and without deception, apply these sanctions to Italy? Of course not. But all the reactionary elements of Social-Democracy demand that the proletarian state shall be the first to apply these sanctions.

Suppose, however, that the bourgeois states will not apply these sanctions and that the U.S.S.R. will be the only state that will follow the advice of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, who will gain by this? The capitalist states, which will maintain relations with Italy. Who will lose by it? Not Italy, but the U.S.S.R. Actually, the boycott will hit, not fascist Italy, but the socialist Land of Soviets. Moreover, the closing of the Suez Canal, which the Second and Amsterdam Internationals are demanding, coincides with the interests of British imperialism, which is displaying an extremely suspicious concern

for the "independence" of Abyssinia. But the Communists do not want to follow in the wake of Italian fascist policy, nor do they want to be towed by British imperialism. Would it not be better, therefore, if the Communists concentrated their efforts on the independent action of the masses under the slogan, "Not a train, not a ship to assist the Italian war in Abyssinia," while not refraining, of course, from bringing pressure to bear on the League of Nations as a subsidiary means of struggle?

Such is the position in regard to difference in tactics.

The new situation calls for a somewhat different presentation of the question of the prospects of the *toilers' struggle against war*. Here, too, the old stereotyped forms, which smack of pure propaganda, are useless. Undoubtedly, *as long as capitalism exists, war is inevitable*. But it is also beyond doubt that we cannot be satisfied with merely asserting this absolutely correct thesis and with waiting fatalistically with folded arms for the next imperialist war. We now have greater opportunities for waging a successful struggle against imperialist wars than we had on the eve of 1914. To-day, we have a state of the proletarian dictatorship, which, becoming stronger day after day, is standing on guard for peace. To-day, this state has a mighty Red Army which is a weapon in the struggle of the international proletariat for peace. To-day, we have a world party of the working class—the Communist International, which will not surrender on the outbreak of war as the Second International did. To-day, after the experience of the war of 1914-18, a particularly profound hatred for war is maturing and growing among the masses of the workers in the midst of the growing war danger. To-day, relying on the U.S.S.R., taking advantage of the antagonisms among the capitalist states, the world proletariat has the opportunity of creating a broad people's anti-war front, which should not only include other classes, but also weak nations and peoples whose independence is menaced by war. To-day, owing to the peace policy of the Soviet Union, the international proletariat can utilise in the struggle against war the position taken by those big states which for various reasons do not want, or fear, war. And all this makes it necessary for the Communist Parties, not only to carry on propaganda against war, but also to pursue a real anti-war policy, an important condition for which is the organisation of all the forces of the working class. Without this organisation of proletarian forces, neither a successful struggle against war, nor a struggle against fascism, which is instigating it, are possible.

#### IV. A CONGRESS OF STRUGGLE FOR THE UNITY OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

##### (a) *The United Front*

That is why our Congress was a Congress of struggle for the unity of the international working-class movement, for unity of action, for trade union unity, for political unity. First of all I will deal with the question of the united front. The essence of the united front does not lie in a formal agreement between two parties (the Communist Party and the Social-Democratic Party) which cease fighting during the period of operation of the agreement with a view to establishing "spheres of influence" in the working-class movement, as if to say: "This is your section and this is mine, let's not interfere with each other, let's live quietly like good neighbours, without excitement and without offending each other." That is the way the question may be presented by a petty-bourgeois who desires to lead a calm and peaceful life, and not by those who have the interests of the working class at heart. Agreements and pacts are subsidiary matters; the main thing in the united front is the joint action of workers belonging to various political trends against the common enemy, capital, *action which presupposes that the Social-Democratic workers come over to the position of the class struggle*. Without this basis, *without the class struggle*, there can be no united front. And as in the capitalist countries large masses of workers are organised in the Social-Democratic Parties and in the reformist trade unions, and as these masses are bound by the discipline of these parties and trade unions, an agreement with these organisations is necessary in order to unleash the struggle of the masses in a united front against the capitalist offensive, fascism and war.

Nor is it right to imagine that the main thing in the united front is to expose the reactionary elements of Social Democracy. It is necessary to expose those elements which are disrupting the struggle of the working class, for it is impossible to fight against capital successfully without resisting the scabs who are protecting the interests of capital. But the exposure of these elements is not an end in itself; it is subordinate to the principal aim of the united front, *viz.*, to mobilise the masses of the workers for the struggle against capital.

What the united front should really be has been illustrated by the united front movement in France.

Comrades, you remember how that movement developed. It began with a modest anti-war movement organised by our late

Comrade Barbusse, a movement which became extremely active after Hitler came into power in Germany. The fury of the fascist regime in Germany, which showed what fascism had in store for the masses of the workers, the revival of the activities of the French fascists, who were encouraged by the easy victory achieved by the fascists in Germany, the feverish arming of German fascism, the alarm felt by the toiling masses of France at the growing war danger, the growing sympathy of these masses for the U.S.S.R., which increased particularly after the French government had abandoned its anti-Soviet policy, all this created favourable soil for the development of an anti-fascist movement. On February 6, 1934, the French fascists, who had not yet become sufficiently strong, decided to measure forces and to secure the overthrow of parliamentary government. Taking advantage of the sensational case of the embezzler Stavisky, French fascism came out in the streets ostensibly to fight against parliamentary corruption. It was indeed a strange spectacle! The vehicles of the most corrupt movement in the world, which is financed by the big magnates of capital, come out as the champions of stern incorruptibility!

The Radical government of Daladier called out the police and the gendarmerie to protect the premises of parliament which the fascists threatened to wreck. A collision occurred between the fascists and the armed forces of the government. The result was that several were killed and a few score were injured. All the reactionaries howled: "Shooting down the people!" Oh, it is quite permissible to shoot down workers, but it is not permissible to touch top-hatted scoundrels who wreck working-class homes!

For a moment consternation reigned in the ranks of the Communist Party. At first, the fascist slogan, "Down with the Daladier government, the government of assassins!" did not meet with adequate resistance on the part of the Communist Party. Here and there, Communists followed the fascists in the street and repeated their call for the overthrow of the Daladier government. But the Communist Party quickly found its bearings and began to criticise Daladier, not for shooting, but for not having shot enough, for capitulating to the onslaught of the fascists, for the fact that, having learned about the collision between the police and gendarmes and the fascist conspirators, he burst into tears and resigned. What can one do about it? Such is the "heroism" of the modern descendants of Mirabeau who, in defending the bourgeois republic, fear their own determination more than they fear the devil!

And if the working class had not been on the alert this republic would have been betrayed by the republicans. The working class instinctively felt that its resoluteness in fighting fascism would determine the degree of resoluteness of the republican elements of the population of France. On February 9, in response to the appeal of the Communist Party, the proletariat of Paris came out in the streets in a counter-demonstration against fascism. Notwithstanding the fact that the Socialist Party had called upon its members not to take part in this Communist demonstration, the Socialist workers were present on the Place de la République and fought bravely against the police side by side with the Communists. Without pacts or agreements, in a situation inflamed to white heat by political passions, the workers of Paris formed a united front in spite of the opposition of the Socialist leaders.

The temper of the workers in all other parts of France was such that the leaders of the Socialist Party and of the reformist trade unions realised that they must provide an outlet for it, otherwise the anger of the masses would overwhelm them. That is why the reformist Confederation of Labour called for a general strike for February 12, and the Unitary Confederation of Labour—which was preparing for a political strike for February 7, called upon the workers to support this strike. Rarely in the history of the working-class movement has a strike taken place in such an atmosphere of sympathy of the broad masses of the population as the strike of February 12, in which nearly 4,000,000 were involved, and which commenced simultaneously with the armed struggle of the Austrian workers. Revolution was in the air. The bourgeoisie realised that the situation was strained to breaking point, and that the working class would not permit fascism to come into power without a fight.

The February days marked a *turning point* in the working-class movement of Europe; they marked the transition from the *fascist offensive to the proletarian counter-offensive*. The events of those days shook the confidence of the bourgeoisie and increased the confidence of the proletariat in its own strength. They marked a sharp turn of the Socialist and reformist workers to the position of the class struggle. Amidst the fire of battle, they laid the foundations of a unity of action which no tricks and devices could break. At the Toulouse Congress of the Socialist Party in the spring of 1934 nearly one-third of the delegates voted in favour of sending a delegation to Moscow to negotiate for the organisation of united action. As a matter of fact, this vote of the Socialist upper ranks showed that *in the lower ranks, the*

*overwhelming majority of the rank and file of the Socialist masses were in favour of the united front.*  
Nevertheless, although the Socialist upper ranks were no longer able to disrupt the united front movement, they were still able to retard it by their opposition. It is well known that in days of great fighting the Socialist workers are less hesitant to violate their party "discipline" than in the period of calm that follows hot fighting. That is why the Communist Party strove to conclude a formal pact with the leaders of the Socialist Party for united action. The Right Wing of the Socialist Party manœuvred, and opposed the slogan for the united front of struggle with the slogan of the amalgamation of the two parties. The Communist Party exposed this crude manœuvre of the opponents of the united front by putting forward concrete points as a platform upon which the amalgamation was to take place, points which subsequently served as the basis for the decisions of the Seventh Congress on the question of the political unity of the working-class movement. On July 27, 1934, a united action pact was signed between the two parties. Has it produced any positive results? Undoubtedly it has. The working class and the toilers of France have gained by united action; the bourgeoisie and the fascists have lost.

United action helped the French proletariat to repel the first onslaught of fascism in France, to dissolve the Doumergue government—the government which was preparing for the fascist dictatorship—and helped to weaken capital's attack on the standard of living of the masses, particularly of the state and municipal employees. The establishment of a united front of struggle served as the starting point for a great movement for trade union unity, which subsequently led to the amalgamation of a number of trade union organisations, particularly of the railway men, and paved the way for the amalgamation of the two Confederations into a single Confederation of Labour. The united front served as the basis for the general people's front of struggle against the capitalist offensive, fascism and war, a people's front which became the centre of attraction for the anti-fascist forces among other classes of the population. By its experience, the French proletariat enriched the whole of the world working-class movement and demonstrated to it that *timely* action against fascism (unlike what happened in Austria and Spain) can avert heavy sacrifices and the bitterness of defeat. Finally, the united front movement in France has brought the question of unity before the whole international working-class movement as the question of the day. To-day international Social-Democracy cannot turn its

back on the united front, for it has become the demand of millions of workers all over the world!

### (b) Trade Union Unity

The reformists cannot now turn their backs on trade union unity, which, after the Seventh Congress, has become the decisive task of the whole of the international working class. And this is not a task of the *remote future*, it is the burning question of *to-day and to-morrow*, the practical fulfilment of which will show whether we are able to fight for the application of the new tactical orientation adopted by the Seventh Congress.

The fulfilment of this task calls for greater persistence, energy and skilful approach than ever, because, in this sphere, in the sphere of trade union unity, we are confronted by enormous difficulties and, for the time being, we have far fewer successes to record in this sphere than in regard to the establishment of the united front in the political sphere. This is due to the fact that while in the majority of cases our parties represent a fairly considerable force compared with the Social-Democratic Parties, and are capable of bringing considerable pressure to bear on the Social-Democratic Parties, we are weak in the trade union movement. Except for France and Czechoslovakia, we have no large Red trade unions in the capitalist countries of Europe. But even in France and Czechoslovakia, the relation of forces between the Red unions and the reformist unions is less in our favour than the relation of forces between the Communist Parties and the Social-Democratic Parties. However, owing to the fact that the Red trade unions in France were stronger than those in other capitalist countries, they have succeeded in breaking down the opposition of the reformist Confederation of Labour and have made great progress in the matter of amalgamating the trade unions. But this cannot be said in regard to other countries where the Communists are now paying dearly for their sectarian sins of past years. We are lagging behind in the matter of trade union unity, in establishing the united front of struggle in the economic sphere, because we have not worked in the reformist trade unions as we should have done.

Another reason why the united front is developing more slowly in the trade union sphere is that during an economic crisis, when a huge army of unemployed exists, it is easier to develop political struggles than to organise strikes.

All these reasons explain why the reformist trade union leaders have been able up to now to prevent the more rapid development

of the united front in the trade union sphere; and this, in turn, has hindered the further development and organisational consolidation of the united action front. The international united action front would have made enormous progress had we succeeded in bringing about trade union unity.

The opponents of trade union unity justify their position, which is fatal to the interests of the proletariat, on the ground that such unity would not add much to the forces which the Amsterdam International already has at its command to-day. These people usually advance the following argument: the Amsterdam International has about 9,000,000 members, whereas the Red International of Labour Unions has, in the capitalist countries, slightly more than 1,000,000, which together, would make about 10,000,000.

But this argument is absolutely false; it is purely mechanical. It reduces a problem of enormous class significance to a simple sum in arithmetic. No, comrades, the unity of the working-class movement is not arithmetic; it is a much more complicated thing than that. And moreover, reformist arithmetic substitutes subtraction for addition. For some reason it "subtracts" from the total membership of the R.I.L.U. the 19,500,000 members of the Soviet trade unions. These nineteen and a half millions do not represent themselves alone; they represent the land of victorious Socialism, the land where the proletariat is in power and uses that power to protect the world proletariat. Just think what a power the world working-class movement would represent if, instead of reformist subtraction we were to engage in the revolutionary adding up of all the forces of the organised working class! We would put an end to the "division" which the bourgeoisie has succeeded in causing in the ranks of the organised working-class movement and would "multiply" the forces of this movement. And we would multiply these forces because we would be approaching the question of the unity of the working-class movement, not arithmetically, but politically.

The revolutionary trade unions would bring a fresh stream into the Amsterdam trade union movement which would quicken its activities. The healing of the split in the trade unions would enable the working class to oppose the capitalist offensive as a united, compact, disciplined army. The capitalists would then be unable to take advantage of the split in the ranks of the workers by playing off one section of the working class against another; and with proper leadership, the united trade union movement would, in the majority of cases, ensure a successful outcome

of the struggle for the immediate demands of the workers. The amalgamation itself would rouse tremendous enthusiasm, not only among the organised workers, but also among the masses of unorganised workers. And this, in addition to the practical and palpable results achieved in the struggle for direct demands as a consequence of the amalgamation, would cause a great influx of the broad masses of the unorganised workers into the united trade unions. Experience in France has already shown that where trade union unity has been actually achieved, for example among the railway men, there is already an increased influx of unorganised workers into the unions; whereas the maintenance of a divided trade union movement not only hinders the development of united action but also the recruiting of new members for the trade unions.

If a united trade union centre were formed as a result of the amalgamation of the Amsterdam International and the R.I.L.U., the numerous autonomous, anarcho-syndicalist and Christian trade unions would be obliged to co-ordinate their actions with the big united unions, and in many cases they would not even be able to keep out of the trade union unity movement. The latter point is particularly important for Spain, where there is a strong anarcho-syndicalist movement, and for Czechoslovakia, where there are several trade union centres.

The advocates of pure arithmetic do not realise to what extent unity would raise the prestige of the trade unions in the eyes of the unorganised workers, to what extent it would increase the confidence of the working class in its organisations. Such an increase in the degree of organisation of the working class, the raising of its fighting spirit, the increased confidence in its own strength, the co-ordination of its fight against capital, would serve as a mighty barrier against fascism, which by every means in its power—terror, bribery, social-demagogery and slander—is striving to sow confusion in the ranks of the workers and to demoralise them.

We do not lay down any conditions for trade union unity. All we want is that the united trade unions shall actually protect the economic interests of the working class. We do not want the trade unions to be used as organs of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, which is contrary to their class function. And if this is accepted, the question of trade union democracy settles itself. Why is there no democracy in the reformist trade unions? Why is the will of the rank-and-file trade union masses frustrated? Why are the individual members and whole organisations which

are most devoted to the cause of the working class, expelled? Because the reactionary reformist leaders pursue a policy which conforms neither to the class interests of the workers, nor to their will. If this policy is abandoned, if the trade unions become organs of the class struggle, it will not be necessary to suppress the will of the masses or to expel the most active adherents of the class struggle. And we Communists plainly and openly say to the millions of workers: *without severing the bloc with the bourgeoisie there cannot be either durable trade union unity or trade union democracy.*

### (c) *A United Party*

But while *severing the bloc with the bourgeoisie* is sufficient to bring about and to consolidate trade union unity, it is not sufficient to bring about political unity, which is a higher form of unity than trade union unity. The consolidation of the forces of the working class in a single political party is a much more difficult and complicated task than achieving trade union unity. This question is giving rise to considerable doubt even in our own ranks. "What! Unite with the Social-Democrats?" some comrades ask in perplexity. "But why have we been waging an irreconcilable struggle against Social-Democracy during the whole of the post-war period? Why have we worked so hard to bolshevise the Sections of the Comintern? Why have we been fighting against opportunist deviations in our own ranks, i.e., against the slightest deviation of unstable elements in the direction of Social-Democracy? Will not the political struggle we have waged in the past have been in vain?" No, comrades. It will not have been in vain.

Had we not fought against Social-Democracy, against every sort of deviation in our ranks, for the bolshevisation of the Communist Parties during the whole of the post-war period, we would not have been able to present the question of a united party as we are able to do now. By our struggle against all forms of opportunism we steeled our parties and built the main Communist framework, and consequently, we are now able boldly to take the initiative in the creation of a united political party of the working class.

In 1920, when Lenin wrote his Twenty-one Conditions, we could not approach the question of the political unity of the working class in the way we are able to do to-day. Why? Because what we had in the capitalist countries at that time were more in the nature of propagandist Communist groups than parties tried in battle and enriched with Bolshevik experience.

Recall what one of our largest and most advanced Sections was at that time: I refer to the Communist Party of Germany in 1920, after the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. The Party was then torn by internal disagreements; it contained "Lefts," "National-Bolsheviks," and Rights of the type of Paul Levi; and it bore a huge burden of Social-Democratic survivals and vacillation. Or recall the case of Hungary in 1919: as a result of the amalgamation of the young Communist Party of Hungary—which had not yet become politically hardened and organisationally strong—with the large Social-Democratic organisation, the Communist vanguard was submerged in the petty-bourgeois sea of Social-Democracy; and this was one of the principal reasons why the Soviet power in Hungary collapsed.

Now, as a result of many years of struggle for the bolshevisation of our Parties, having achieved the iron unity of our ranks—which in many countries have received their baptism of fire in big class battles and have passed the test of underground work—we are able, in the present concrete situation, to present the question of creating a united revolutionary party of the proletariat *in a new way*.

And such a presentation of the question of the political unity of the working-class movement is infallible from the point of view of principle. We Communists are the party of the proletarian revolution, the party of the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. But unless the forces of the working class are united in both the economic sphere and political sphere, the victory of the proletariat cannot be achieved. The split in the working-class movement is only to the advantage of the bourgeoisie and enables the latter to prevent the victory of the proletariat. On the other hand, in fighting for the proletarian dictatorship, the Communists are preparing for the achievement of complete proletarian unity; for only under the dictatorship of the proletariat will the influence of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat be destroyed and all possibility of splitting the working class disappear. That is why the Communists are the genuine vehicles of the unity of the working-class movement.

Can the party which stands for class collaboration with the bourgeoisie say the same about itself? By its collaboration with the bourgeoisie such a party splits the ranks of the proletariat and thereby strengthens the position of the bourgeoisie, facilitates the defeat of the proletariat and prevents the victory of the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. Those who, like the reactionary elements of Social-

Democracy, still abide by the position of class collaboration, cannot be anything else than enemies of the unity of the working-class movement, deliberate splitters of its ranks. That is why we Communists alone have the right to raise the banner of the political unity of the working-class movement, the banner of the united revolutionary party of the proletariat.

But we Communists are not in favour of any sort of unity, of unity at any price. Of what value is the "unity" of the Labour Party if that "unity" is utilised by the reactionary leaders of that Party for the purpose of supporting the policy of the bourgeoisie? Before the February events, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party also boasted about its "unity"; but this unity was unable to stand the test of the very first serious class battles. Such formal unity is harmful to the proletariat; it merely retards the class struggle out of fear of destroying this fictitious unity. We Communists stand for organisational political unity *on the basis of principles*. We stand for a united party of the working class which will unreservedly serve its interests, the interests of the struggle for the *proletarian revolution*.

That is why the Seventh Congress declared that the creation of such a party is possible only on the condition of "complete independence from the bourgeoisie and a complete severance of the bloc between Social-Democracy and the bourgeoisie, on the condition that unity of action be first brought about, that the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets be recognised; that support of one's own bourgeoisie in imperialist war be rejected; and that the party be constructed on the basis of democratic centralism which ensures unity of will and action and has been tested by the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks." (Quoted from the resolution of the Seventh Congress on Comrade Dimitrov's report.)

If one ponders over the conditions for the political amalgamation of the workers' parties advanced by the Seventh Congress, it will become clear that they constitute the core of the programme of the Communist International. We do not demand the formal recognition of the programme of the Communist International as a condition for amalgamation because we want, by adopting a proper approach to the Social-Democratic workers, to help them to cast off many Social-Democratic prejudices; because we do not want to provide an argument for the reactionary elements of Social-Democracy in their agitation in opposition to the slogan

for a united party. We do not add to the conditions of the Seventh Congress the demand that a definite attitude be taken towards the Soviet Union, because the sincere recognition of the "dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets" determines one's attitude towards the U.S.S.R. We do not put forward the demand for a struggle against the colonial policy of one's own bourgeoisie, because rejection of "support of one's own bourgeoisie in *imperialist war*," presupposes that the parties will fight against the most arrogant and insolent form of *imperialist policy*, *viz.*, colonial policy.

We are often asked why we are now laying down five conditions for unity instead of twenty-one as we did at the Second Congress of the Communist International. We are doing that because the five conditions of the Seventh Congress cover the twenty-one conditions of the Second Congress; because the Communist International is not now in danger of being swamped by Centrism; because the working class has not only passed through the post-war experience of the policy of Right-wing German Social-Democracy, but also of "Left" Austrian Social-Democracy; because there is not yet an "influx" of Social-Democratic leaders into the Communist International, what we have as yet is a stream of Social-Democratic workers towards Communism; because our five conditions wholly correspond to the thoughts and sentiments of these workers.

Will it be a bad thing if a wide discussion on the five conditions formulated by our Congress takes place in the Social-Democratic Parties?

No, it will not.

Will it be a bad thing if hundreds of thousands of Social-Democratic workers say: "The programme of Party unity put forward by the Communist International is the programme for which our class brothers suffered in Germany, Austria and Spain, in battles and defeats, and for which we are prepared to fight"? No, it will be a good thing if they do.

Do the five conditions correspond to the interests of the broadest strata of the proletariat? Yes, they do, because they serve as a political platform for these strata in their struggle against the reactionary section of Social-Democracy, which is opposing all forms of unity: unity of action, trade union unity and political unity. Does the presentation of the question of a united party open up any prospect for the united front movement? Yes, it does. Without such a prospect the united front movement would be drifting without a rudder; for Marxist-Leninists have always

linked up every movement for partial demands with our ultimate aims. And the inter-relation between the united front and a united party reflects the inter-relation between the movement for partial demands and our ultimate aim.

To-day, the existence of two General Staffs of the movement is inevitable; but this is a temporary situation caused by the split in the labour movement. The whole experience of the world working-class movement and of its battles shows that *united leadership* is an elementary condition for success in the struggle. That is why, by fighting to the utmost to develop the united front, the Communists will prepare the conditions for every form of unity of the working-class movement, will prepare the conditions for creating a single General Staff for this movement in the form of a united party. The fears expressed by our comrades concerning unity with the Social-Democrats are quite legitimate and are well grounded; but often, comrades who express these fears do not approach either Social-Democracy or the question of a united party dialectically. They take Social-Democracy as it was yesterday, or as it is to-day, and ignore the process of revolutionisation that is taking place among the rank-and-file members. They regard the question of amalgamation from the point of view of the "congealed" relation of forces between the Communists and Social-Democrats in the working-class movement. This is wrong, comrades.

The question of a united party must not be regarded from the point of view of yesterday's, or even to-day's state of the working-class movement. The formation of a united party must be taken as a living, dialectical process of struggle. We shall not unite with the Social-Democrats of yesterday, nor with the people who are rushing from side to side and vacillating to-day; we shall unite with our class brothers who by their experience of the struggle, cemented by the blood jointly shed with the Communists, will become convinced that we are right, that the programme and tactics of the Communist International are right. The united party slogan is not a slogan for unity between leading bodies; it is a slogan of the mass struggle, of the persistent and stern struggle which remoulds people and regenerates them in a revolutionary manner. And we advance this slogan to the masses because the Communist movement has grown into manhood, because it can now set itself the task, not only of *bolshevising* the Communist Parties, but of *bolshevising the working class*. This is the political significance of the united party slogan.

## V. A CONGRESS WHICH SUMMED UP THE LESSONS OF ARMED BATTLES

Our Congress was a Congress which summed up the results of the armed battles which have been fought during the past years: the armed struggle in Austria in February, and that in Spain in October 1934; the numerous heroic battles for the Soviet power waged by the Red Army of China.

The fact that the Social-Democratic workers, even if belatedly, took to arms in order to resist fascism is of tremendous historical significance. The armed struggles of the Austrian and Spanish workers are evidence of the bankruptcy of the policy of Social Democracy; they are evidence of the change that is taking place in the temper of the broad masses of the Social-Democratic workers; they show that considerable strata of Social-Democratic workers and party officials, who for a number of years have been trained in the spirit of class collaboration and of waiting passively for the victory of fascism, are now turning towards the policy of the class struggle, to the policy of actively influencing the progress of events.

These struggles teach us Communists the irrefutable truth that there are hundreds of thousands of proletarians in the ranks of the Social-Democratic parties who will fight equally with the Communists for the cause of the working class, that if these proletarians are not yet in our ranks we are partly to blame for that, for we have not been able to approach these militant people properly and prove to them that our Party is right and that the Party to which they belong is wrong.

One cannot speak without emotion of the miracles of heroism displayed by the *Schutzbündler* in the February days in Austria, by the miners of Asturias during the October battles, and by the brave defenders of Oviedo. The names of Munichreiter, Koloman Wallisch, Weisel and Aida Lafuente will be remembered for ever by the working class. Nor will the working class forget the thirty Red Guard prisoners whom the government troops in Asturias put at the head of their column to screen them from the fire of the workers. They will not forget their proud cry: "Don't hesitate, comrades, shoot, the fascists are behind us!" The whole of the world proletariat bow their heads in respect to the memory of the numerous unknown heroes who rushed forward to storm the whiteguard strongholds with dynamite in their hands and lighted cigarettes between their lips, preferring to die rather than retreat. Why, then, in spite of this self-sacrifice and devotion to the

cause of the revolution, did not the workers of Asturias and the *Schutzbündler* of Austria achieve victory?

In his report at the Seventh Congress Comrade Dimitrov pointed out with striking clarity that the working class can stand in the path of fascism and prevent it from coming into power. The example of France in this respect is very instructive. But in order to avert the victory of fascism the following four conditions are required: (a) the militant activity of the working class itself and the consolidation of its forces in a united proletarian front; (b) the existence of a strong revolutionary party which shall properly lead the struggle of the toilers against fascism; (c) the pursuit by the working class of a correct policy towards the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie; (d) vigilance towards fascism, the aiming of well-timed blows against it and the maintenance of the initiative in the struggle against fascism. Were these elementary conditions for the successful struggle against fascism observed in Austria and Spain? No, they were not.

The first condition: *the fighting capacity of the proletariat and the united front*. What was the position in regard to that? Did the Spanish and Austrian Social-Democrats pursue a policy of developing the fighting capacity of the proletariat?

The Austrian and Spanish Social-Democratic leaders not only failed to strengthen the fighting capacity of the working class; they actually weakened it in every possible way. The Spanish Socialists, as is well known, joined the coalition government which passed an anti-strike law, restricted the rights of the trade unions, introduced the so-called Protection of Public Order Act under which Social-Democratic workers who took part in the October battles are now being tried; they did everything to lull the vigilance of the workers towards the monarchist and fascist elements. The Austrian Social-Democratic leaders pursued an even worse policy during the whole of the post-war period, the policy of systematically retreating before the bourgeoisie and fascism.

From 1918 to 1930 the Austrian Social-Democrats were in the government. They then had arms at their command, the arsenals; they held strong positions in the army, in the police force and in the municipalities; they had the *Schutzbund* at their command as an organ of defence. But during these thirteen years the Austrian Social-Democrats gradually surrendered all these positions. They subdued the anger of the Viennese proletariat in July 1927. Like cowards, they signed the notorious Guttenberg pact by which the fascist trade unions were recognised to have

the same rights as the free trade unions. The rank-and-file Socialist workers who demanded that the constant retreating should be stopped were admonished by their Social-Democratic leaders and reminded of the "Linz programme." And as is well known, this programme prescribed waiting until the bourgeoisie struck the first blow; in other words, taking action only when the bourgeoisie had become strong and when the proletariat had become weak. This is exactly what happened in February 1934.

The situation in regard to the united front and consolidating the forces of the proletariat for the struggle against the bourgeoisie and fascism was bad. In Spain, where the working-class movement is split up more than in any other country, where, in addition to the Socialist and Communist Parties, the influence of anarchism is strong, where there are three Confederations of Labour, the Socialist leaders stubbornly fought against everything that would help to unite the forces of the proletariat. They opposed the formation of factory committees, although factory committees in the hands of the proletariat would have been powerful instruments of trade union unity and the organised representatives of the *whole* of the working class. They, like the anarchist leaders, refused to enter into any negotiations for trade union unity, although trade union unity was a decisive condition for the successful struggle against fascism. They opposed the formation of Soviets, although the Soviets would have been a means of organising and consolidating the forces of the proletariat and the peasantry against the bourgeoisie and the landlords, against fascist reaction, they would have been organs of struggle for the revolutionary seizure of power. Instead of honestly working to establish a united proletarian front embracing the organised as well as unorganised masses, they manœuvred and proposed a united front of the Workers' Alliance in the form of a coalition of the leading bodies of several working-class organisations. The Right-wing elements in the local branches of the Socialist Party sabotaged the entry of the Communist organisations into the Workers' Alliance, and they sabotaged the carrying out of the Communists' proposal to transform the Alliance into elected workers' and peasants' organs of struggle for power.

In Austria things were much worse. The Social-Democratic leaders simply spurned every attempt on the part of the numerically small Communist Party to create a united front on the spurious plea that the "unity" of the proletariat was already achieved within the Social-Democratic Party.

In Spain and in Austria the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties prepared for the armed struggle, not as for a mass people's movement, but as if it were the business of exclusive party groups operating behind the backs of the masses. They failed to understand that "in order to be successful, insurrection must be based, not on a conspiracy, not on a party, but on the advanced class."<sup>1</sup> The result of this policy—which was not intended to unite the working class but to keep it divided—was that in Austria, it was not the working class that rose in armed rebellion, but only a small section of the workers (the *Schutzbund*); that the Social-Democratic leaders did not even call for a general strike; that while the *Schutzbund* was fighting, the rest of the workers in Vienna went to work in the usual way, while the railway men calmly transported military reinforcements from the provinces for the Dollfuss government.

In Spain, while the miners in Asturias were bravely engaged in a life and death struggle, the Right-wing Socialist leaders in Biscay persuaded the workers who were marching to Bilbao to disperse to their homes because everything was "all over"; and in Barcelona, the anarchist leaders broadcast a message from the government radio station calling upon the workers to resume work.

Such was the position in regard to the first fundamental condition for the successful struggle against fascism.

The second condition: *the existence of a strong revolutionary party which shall properly lead the struggle of the toilers against fascism*. Did the Spanish working class have such a party? No. The Communist Party of Spain pursued a correct policy, but it was not strong enough to lead the struggle of all the anti-fascist forces in the country. The line pursued by the leaders of the Socialist Party, however, was fundamentally wrong. It was wrong because from the very first days of the revolution the Social-Democrats did not strengthen the positions of the proletariat, but weakened them. The Socialist Party did not strike with all its might against monarchist and fascist conspirators; it struck its blows at the Left-wing of the working-class movement. It did not confiscate the land of the big feudal landowners and the Church in order to destroy the economic base of the counter-revolution, but actually protected these reactionary forces from the agrarian revolution. It did not dissolve the *Guardia Civil*, which was hated by the people, but strengthened it by

<sup>1</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume XXI, Book 1, page 224.

forming a "Storm Guard" on the fascist model. It did not purge the army of the reactionary officers; it strengthened their positions in it. This was not the policy of a revolutionary party; it was the policy of a party that was preparing for the victory of the counter-revolution.

Such also was the policy of the leaders of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party, which, step by step, retreated before the onslaught of the Austrian bourgeoisie and fascism. Did the Austrian Social-Democrats in February, and the Spanish Social-Democrats in October 1934, know whither they were leading the workers? Did they know what the object of the armed fighting was? Was it to seize power? This is what the workers wanted, but the Socialist leaders did not pursue that aim. They wanted to frighten the bourgeoisie and compel it to be more compliant in their negotiations with them.

Hence it follows that neither the Austrian nor the Spanish Social-Democrats could have pursued a *correct policy towards the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie*, i.e., they could not fulfil the *third condition* necessary for the victorious struggle against fascism.

The urban petty bourgeoisie is a vacillating class. In the majority of cases it inclines towards the side that impresses it with its determination and strength. Like the peasantry, it follows those who know where they are going, why they are going, what they want to achieve by going there, and what the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie can gain from it. But the party which is afraid of the working class achieving victory, which fears the revolutionary activity of the masses as its own shadow, can never lead the toilers to victory. And it is precisely because the Spanish Social-Democrats were afraid of the victory of the workers' and peasants' revolution in Spain, that, although in the government, they not only failed to insist on the big latifundia being transferred to the peasantry, but on the contrary, they suppressed the peasant movement for the seizure of these lands. That is why the sons of the peasants in the Spanish army did not actively support the Spanish workers in October; that is why the fascist agitation against the Republic carried on by Gil Robles meets with response among the Catholic peasant masses.

And now about the fourth condition: *vigilance towards fascism, the aiming of well-timed blows against it and the maintenance of the initiative in the struggle against fascism*. It is evident from all that has been said above that there was no vigilance towards fascism in Austria and Spain; there was a

systematic lulling of this vigilance by calls upon the workers to remain "on the legal ground of the Constitution." There were no well-timed blows against fascism; there was an armed struggle under conditions least favourable for the proletariat and most favourable for the ruling classes. Social-Democracy surrendered the initiative in the class battles to the bourgeoisie. This is what Social-Democratic leadership of armed struggles looks like.

But take another country where the armed struggle of the toilers has been going on, not for several days, but for several years; where there has never been a Social-Democratic Party and no strong Social-Democratic mass organisations; where the working class never had the long training and organisation which the workers had in Spain, and particularly in Austria; where the working class itself is not large, and, numerically, is submerged in the peasant sea. And yet the workers and peasants of this country have for seven years victoriously repelled the attacks of the militarist reaction, have routed the armies of the enemy, have been arming themselves at his expense, are creating new Soviet regions and are achieving new successes, because *their struggles are being led by Communist-Bolsheviks*. I speak of that wonderful page in the annals of modern colonial revolution, of the struggle for the *Soviet power in China*.

Chiang Kai-shek's six campaigns against the Red Army ended in military and political failure. And although in the autumn of 1934, the Chinese Red Army, surrounded on all sides by superior enemy forces, was obliged to abandon the Central Soviet Region of Kiangsi, to-day, units of the Red Army occupy large regions in six provinces of China: Szechwan, Kwaichow, Kansu, Shansi, Hunan and Hupeh. Guerilla units are operating in the province of Kiangsi, which the regular troops of the Red Army had abandoned. The Red Army's fighting front extends for a thousand kilometres, and this, thanks to its splendid manœuvring ability, makes the Red Army almost invulnerable to the attacks of the enemy.

The fabulous march of the main forces of the Red Army under the command of Chu Te and Mao Dze-tung from Kiangsi to Szechwan, a distance of three thousand kilometres, mostly at night, or in pouring rain, in order to avoid Chiang Kai-shek's heavy bombing planes, during which the Red troops had to cross inaccessible mountains and wide rivers, without pontoons, and without the necessary stores and transport facilities, testifies to its *high degree of class-consciousness*, its super-human stamina and *fighting spirit* which no Chinese militarist army can break.

The successes of the Red Army are also evidence of the *inseparable ties* it has with the broad masses of the toilers of China, who render every possible assistance to the Red forces in their struggle against Chiang Kai-shek; they are evidence of the correct tactics pursued by the Communist Party of China, which *links the struggle of the army with the mass people's movement*, one of the forms of which is the *guerrilla warfare* carried on in the rear of the enemy; they are evidence of the fact that the commanders of the Red Army skilfully utilise the *antagonisms* in the camp of the militarists; they are evidence of a military strategy which does *not allow the initiative* in military operations to pass to the enemy, but which, by a *well-timed counter-attack*, repels his offensive and politically demoralises him.

But the Soviet movement, which up to now has developed outside of the main industrial centres, is setting itself bigger tasks at the present stage of development of the Chinese revolution. The Communist Party of China is striving to make the Soviet movement the *political core of a united China*; it is striving to take the lead in the struggle of the masses of the people of the whole of China against Japanese imperialism, to establish effective contact in the struggle against the imperialist invaders with all the military groups which are prepared to defend their country against aggression. For the purpose of creating such a broad anti-imperialist front the Chinese Communists offer to enter into an agreement with any and every political or military group with a view to joint action against the imperialist invaders on the following conditions: *Cessation of military operations against the Red Army and the Soviet districts; establishment of political liberties; arming the people and the organisation of a popular war* against the imperialist conquerors.

This programme for the formation of an anti-imperialist front of struggle of the Chinese people proposed by the Communist Party of China is not a manœuvre. It would be a crime to manœuvre in connection with the defence of one's own people against imperialist pirates. One may manœuvre against an enemy but not against a people whose national liberty and life the Communists are heroically defending. And if it is true that the Communists, and the Communists alone, have the right in all countries of the world to speak *in the name of the people*—for they alone are the real *friends of the people*, for they alone pay with their lives and liberty for the part they take in the cause of the people—then it is still more true in regard to the Chinese Communists who are the sons of a people who are more oppressed and

suppressed by world imperialism than any other people in the world. The glorious deeds of the Chinese Communists and their programme of national liberation are evidence of the profound understanding of the great political responsibility that the Chinese Soviets bear before the *whole people* who are fighting for national liberty, the profound understanding of the responsibility which the Communist Party of China bears before the *workers of the whole world* for the fate of the Chinese revolution. And only such a Bolshevik combination of the interests of one's people with the interests of the toilers of the whole world, only such a bold application of the people's anti-imperialist front, only the leadership of the Communist Party of China which has been tried and tested in the fire of battle, can push the Chinese revolution forward, *emancipate* the Chinese people from the *yoke of imperialism*, restore the *integrity and unity of China* and establish the *Soviet power* over the whole country.

## VI. A CONGRESS OF A NEW TACTICAL LINE

The experience of the struggle for the united front in France, the lessons of the armed struggles in China, Austria and Spain in the midst of the process of revolutionisation of the working class, have stimulated the Communist International, at its Seventh Congress, to adopt a new tactical line.

It is said that, in this connection, all the opponents of the Communist International and the enemies of our movement rejoice and say: "The Comintern is changing its tactics."

What astonishing news! The tactics of a political party are not the spectacles of a musty keeper of archives who never takes them off, even when he goes to bed. Tactics, which are the sum total of the methods and means of struggle of a political party, are precisely intended to be changed if changed circumstances require it. We Communists are a live, active party, and not archive rats who fail to see the political and social changes that take place in the life of the people. We are not like the British diehards, for example, who obstinately repeat the slanderous fables about the U.S.S.R. although glaring facts daily refute their foolish fables. The Communists least of all want to resemble the wiseacre who, in reply to the reproach that his arguments were contradicted by the facts, said: "All the worse for the facts!"

But, say our opponents, the new tactics of the Communist International contradict the old tactics. Well, even if they did, what's wrong with that? The tactics of the workers' party in imperialist wars, for example, "contradict" its tactics in national wars. Only hopeless pedants would now declare that the tactics of the workers' party in national wars were wrong. Right tactics become wrong tactics when they are applied in concrete historical conditions other than those for which they were intended.

Tactics remain correct for the period and for the conditions for which they were intended, even though they are unsuitable for the new conditions. That is why we emphatically repudiate the clumsy attempt of the reactionary section of the Social-Democrats to make it appear that the old tactical line of the Communist International was wrong. Was the Communist Party of Germany right in waging an irreconcilable struggle against the Social-Democrats when the bourgeoisie in Germany with the aid of the Social-Democrats carried on capitalist exploitation and ruled the country? It was absolutely right. Is the Communist Party of Germany right to-day, when Social-Democracy as a political party is smashed and when the Social-Democratic workers are turning

towards the position of the class struggle, in concentrating its fire on fascism as the bitterest enemy of the working class? Absolutely right. This is an obvious contradiction, is it not? But it is a contradiction only in the minds of those who do not understand a scrap about the living dialectics of the class struggle.

And here is another contradiction: formerly, we are told, the Communists did not pursue a united front policy; now they are pursuing it. But if the Communists did not pursue a united front policy before, it was because the Social-Democrats systematically rejected every proposal for a united struggle. That is what happened in Germany on July 20, 1932, when, in retaliation to von Papen's dissolution of the Prussian Social-Democratic government, the Communists proposed that they and the Social-Democrats jointly call upon the masses to fight. That is what happened on January 31, 1933, when, on the eve of Hitler's accession to power, the Communists proposed to the Social-Democrats and to the reformist unions that a general strike be organised jointly. That is what happened in France, when, from 1922 onward, the Communist Party, on various occasions, proposed a united front *twenty-six times* and met with a refusal each time. That is what happened to the proposal made by the Communist International on March 5, 1933, when the fascists seized power in Germany. That is what happened to the Communist International's appeal to the Second International on October 10, 1934, in connection with the events in Spain and the heroic struggle of the Asturian miners. This is what happened only the other day to the communication sent by the Communist Party of France to the British Labour Party inviting the latter to take the initiative in convening an international conference of all workers' organisations for the purpose of deciding on effective measures to combat the Abyssinian adventure. That is what happened . . . and because that happened there was no united front. And because this is still happening in most capitalist countries, the united front, which was started in France, cannot be extended. And because it *should not and will not happen*, the Communist International is changing its tactics. And if the Social-Democrats could oppose the united front in the past it was because the pressure of the working class in favour of united struggle was not sufficient. This will not happen in the future, because the defeat suffered by the whole international working class as a consequence of the bankruptcy of the policy of German Social-Democracy is causing the proletarian masses of the whole world loudly to demand united action, and they are universally

supporting the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

It is said that the *united front tactics* contradict the "class against class" tactics. But as Comrade Dimitrov has quite rightly said, the "class against class" tactics are not the tactics of the struggle of one section of the working class against another, but the tactics of mobilising the forces of the proletariat as a class against another class—the bourgeoisie, on the basis of the united front. If in the preceding stage the "class against class" tactics were transformed into a struggle, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against Social-Democracy, it was because Social-Democracy had entered into a *bloc* with the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary section of the working class, because it had coalesced with the apparatus of the capitalist state, had introduced the fascist type of arbitration in strikes, had undertaken police functions (Zörgiebel, Grezinsky, Severing), because after the general strike in Great Britain it had said: "Never again!" had supported the policy of Mondism, etc. And by still persisting in this policy so fatal for the working class, as in the Scandinavian countries, for example, Social-Democracy hinders the application of the "class against class" tactics on the basis of the united front. But the "class against class" tactics which the workers and their vanguard united in the Communist International want to apply do not preclude the united front; on the contrary, they presuppose it. That is how the Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. conceived the "class against class" tactics. The resolution adopted in February 1928 clearly speaks of the necessity of proposing a united front, both national and local, "in so far as considerable strata of the masses of the workers still follow the reformist leaders."

Such is our reply to our enemies. And now about the doubts expressed by our friends. Some think that the present attitude of the Communist International towards Social-Democracy is in crying contradiction to the position of *Bolshevism*, which throughout its history has waged a ruthless struggle against the Mensheviks. They argue as follows: "It is well known that the Bolsheviks fought against the conciliators who tried to unite the Mensheviks with the Bolsheviks. Is not the Communist International, with its unity of the working-class movement slogan, slipping into the position of *conciliation* with the Mensheviks? The Bolsheviks did not win the masses by organising a *united front* with the Mensheviks but by exposing the Mensheviks as agents of the bourgeoisie, and thereby won the

workers away from the latter's influence. The Bolsheviks appealed directly to the masses and led their movement without and over the heads of the Mensheviks. Neither in 1905, nor in the years of reaction, nor in 1917 did the Bolsheviks advance the slogan of a *united front government*, and least of all did they advance the slogan of a *people's front*. How is it possible to do this now?"

It is true that Bolshevism fought against Menshevism, and against conciliation with it, as determinedly as the Communist Party of Germany, for example, fought against Brandler and the German conciliators. But it is also true that at various stages of its development Bolshevism fought the Mensheviks in various ways, including an armed struggle in the period of the proletarian revolution. In 1910, for example, the Bolsheviks entered into a *bloc* with the Party Mensheviks<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of fighting against the Right and Left liquidators. Did this *bloc* imply that the Bolsheviks laid down their arms before Menshevism, that the Bolsheviks began to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards the Mensheviks? Not in the least. By means of that *bloc* the Bolsheviks split the ranks of the Mensheviks, and, by helping one section of them to come over to the Party position, they struck a blow at Menshevism as a trend which served as the channel of bourgeois influence in the ranks of the proletariat. The fact that the Bolsheviks adopted a *different* approach towards different trends among the Menshevik Social-Democrats did not make them conciliators. The conciliators were those who obscured the principles underlying the disagreements between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, who called upon the Bolsheviks to cease their struggle against Menshevism on the ground that the latter was a "legitimate" trend in the working-class movement, and who denied that Menshevism was harmful to the interests of the proletariat; they were the ones who actually tried to get Bolshevism to capitulate before Menshevism.

Only downright scoundrels can assert that in fighting for the unity of the working class, the Communist International is obscuring the fundamental differences that divide the Communists from the Social-Democrats, i.e., the question of class collaboration, of the proletarian revolution, of the dictatorship of

<sup>1</sup> i.e., those Mensheviks who were in favour of preserving the underground Party organisations during the period of reaction as against those who demanded the dissolution of the underground organisation and the pursuit of purely legal activities.—ED.

the proletariat in the form of Soviet power, of defence of the bourgeois fatherland, etc.

It would be sheer madness to obscure these disagreements now that the bankruptcy of the Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie is revealed, now that the whole progress of events has proved the correctness of the line of the Communist International, that the masses are turning to the Left precisely because their own experience has convinced them that the class struggle is necessary. Only hopeless idiots can think that by helping the Social-Democratic workers to come over to the position of the class struggle by means of the united front tactics we are facilitating the capitulation of Communism to Social-Democracy. If the Bolsheviks adopted a different approach towards the various trends of Menshevism in the years of reaction, there is still greater justification for the Communists doing this to-day in the capitalist countries when great changes are taking place in the ranks of the Social-Democratic workers, as well as in the ranks of the whole working class. Only by abandoning the view that Social-Democracy is one reactionary mass will the Communists be able actively to influence the process of revolutionisation of the Social-Democratic workers, without waiting for a spontaneous turn towards Communism.

Moreover, it would be wrong to think that the working class movement in capitalist countries to-day, in the epoch of the incipient proletarian revolution, must traverse the same path of development, down to its minutest detail, that was traversed by Bolshevism, which took political shape under different historically concrete circumstances from those that exist now. It must not be forgotten that in the pre-war working-class movement the Russian Bolsheviks were the *first* party of the new type, which laid a road for itself without past experience and precedents to go by. Since then, Bolshevism has become a world trend which has found its organisational embodiment in a world Bolshevik Party—the Communist International. Since then, Bolshevism, in conjunction with the working class, has conquered one-sixth of the globe, and has acquired a mighty instrument for influencing the world proletariat such as the *state of the proletarian dictatorship and the victorious construction of Socialism*. Bolshevism's rich, thirty years' experience, which is accessible to the international working-class movement, in its turn, shortens the latter's road compared with that traversed by Russian Bolshevism in the course of its development. That is why, in applying the experience of the tactics pursued by the Russian Bolsheviks to the

working-class movement of to-day, a "discount" must be allowed for the changed social-political situation. Secondly, it will be impossible to understand the present tactics of the Communist International if the specific features of the working-class movement abroad, which distinguish it from the Russian working-class movement prior to October 1917, are ignored. Social-Democracy has far deeper roots among the masses in modern capitalist countries than the Mensheviks had in Russia, for capitalism in those countries is stronger than Russian capitalism was. The working class in those capitalist countries is better organised than the Russian proletariat was before the revolution; but it is organised in mass Social-Democratic Parties and in mass reformist trade unions. It received a long reformist, political and organisational training and became a conservative force which hindered the penetration of new ideas among the masses of the workers. In the overwhelming majority of capitalist countries Communism has not had the asset of revolutions (1905-1907) in which Russian Bolshevism became steeled; it had, however, to overcome a very strong Social-Democracy and strong reformist trade unions.

In its advance among the masses, Communism could not avoid Social-Democracy and the reformist trade unions, nor could it exercise such direct influence upon the working class as Russian Bolshevism exercised upon the fresh, revolutionary human material it had to deal with, which had not yet become saturated with reformist influences. The spontaneous element plays a less important role in the mass movement in modern capitalist countries than it did in pre-revolutionary Russia, for example, where the reformist trade union movement was weak, and where the political and organisational positions occupied by the Mensheviks in the working-class movement were weak.

In modern capitalist countries, however, it is not only the proletariat, but also other strata of the toiling population, that are better organised.

In those countries, the seeds of revolution have not fallen upon the virgin soil of the maturing agrarian revolution, as was the case in Russia. Communism in those countries found a peasantry, and an urban petty-bourgeoisie, among which the process of political differentiation had taken place, which were organised in various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, in various forms of co-operative societies, mutual aid societies, etc. It was extremely difficult for Communism to force its way directly to these allies of the working class over the heads of all these

organisations. It would have been ridiculous, to say the least, to wait until all these organisations had automatically fallen to pieces so that the Communists could with their unsullied hands collect the "deserted" masses which had abandoned all petty bourgeois prejudices.

A revolutionary situation in which the masses change their views, and old organisations break down with amazing rapidity, does not yet exist in the overwhelming majority of capitalist countries; but neither do the masses regard the line of demarcation between the various political parties as rigidly as they have done up to now. The masses have now begun to move; they are already *rebeling* against the bankrupt policies of their old organisations; but *they are not yet prepared to abandon them*. They are, however, *bringing pressure to bear upon the leaders of their organisations* and are demanding a *different policy*, based on the *class struggle*, and not on *class collaboration*. They are demanding from their old leaders, who are as obstinate as bulls which refuse to leave their stalls, the establishment of unity of action in the struggle against capital between all organisations who want to fight against it. It is to this historically concrete position, to these specific features of the present working-class movement in the capitalist countries, to this transition period in the growth of class-consciousness and activity of all the toiling masses—who are on the road leading from the policy of class collaboration to the policy of class struggle, from supporting the bourgeoisie to supporting the proletariat, from reformism to Communism—that *the tactics of the united workers' front, which serves as the basis for the general people's front, correspond*.

Often, efforts are made to find historical analogies and parallels with the past. These are very valuable, but they will be of little use to us if we fail to grasp the vital thing in the specific features of the present world situation. Taking advantage of the crisis, capital has clutched the toilers by the throat in a deadly grip. The fight is such as has never before been witnessed in the history of the working-class movement. Nor have we witnessed such a political regime, such a terrorist regime, as German fascism. The imperialist wars which the bourgeoisie is preparing for the toilers will also be *fascist wars*, i.e., wars in which there will be no distinction between front and rear, between belligerent armies and peaceful populations, wars waged at a distance, wars waged with machinery, gas, and bacteria. No matter how zealously we search the pages of text books on history, we shall not find in them a situation analogous to the present, in which revolution,

war and fascism have become so interwoven in the development of mankind. Consequently, we must not base our tactics on analogies, but on a concrete analysis of the relation of class forces at the given moment.

Is the relation of class forces to-day such as enables us to say that the conditions have matured for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in modern capitalist countries? No. These conditions have not yet matured, because, in a number of countries the proletariat has not yet torn itself away from the influence of the bourgeoisie, nor has it thrown off the influence of Social-Democracy. In the overwhelming majority of capitalist countries the Communists are still too weak to lead the masses directly into the fight for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. The working class itself is split up, and, therefore, is unable to take the lead of the other strata of the toilers who in some countries are still inclining towards fascism. What would you want the parties which do not want to engage merely in *propaganda* for the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviet power to do under such circumstances? Wash their hands and repudiate responsibility for the situation which the policy of the reactionary elements of Social-Democracy has led to?

But the working class is demanding much more from the Communists; it is calling upon them to say what it must do *to-day*, with the *present relation of forces*, in order to withstand the onslaught of capital, to save itself and its people from fascism, and to save itself and the whole of mankind from war.

The desertion of Social-Democracy by the masses, which has now begun, and the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. are transforming the Communists into a force which cannot rest content with merely the propagandist repudiation of capitalism, with merely criticising the inadequate political maturity of the movement to-day. In order to utilise the growing power of the working class to the utmost, the Communists must actively intervene in the present mass movement and strive to raise it to the level of the central task of the working-class movement, viz., the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. That is why the Communists are now working unceasingly to restore the unity of the working-class movement, the militant unity of the trade unions, political unity, as the fundamental condition for the successful struggle against the capitalist offensive, fascism and war; for without this concrete struggle of the present day, the fight for the proletarian revolution and for the proletarian dictatorship is impossible.

We are fighting to transfer the burdens of the crisis to the shoulders of the ruling classes, for the dissolution of fascism and the fascist movement (disarming the fascist gangs, expulsion of fascists from the state apparatus, dissolution of their organisations, suppression of their press, arrest of their leaders), for the restoration of the liberties of the working class and its organisations, for peace, and against war. But we Communists are practical revolutionaries, we know that the present bourgeois governments will not grant our demands. These demands, however, may be met as a result of the pressure brought to bear by the masses upon a government which can arise out of a powerful united front movement that will grow into a general people's front.

Such a government will not be a coalition government, a government of collaboration between Social-Democracy and the bourgeoisie. The coalition government was a government which fought against the Left-wing of the working class. The *united front government, however, is the government of cessation of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the government of collaboration between the workers' organisations which have severed the bloc with the bourgeoisie, the government which fights against fascism and not against the working class.* One government paved the way for the fascist dictatorship; the other government *must pave the way for the victory of the working class.*

Nor will this government be a Social-Democratic government like those which, as experience has shown (Great Britain, Sweden, etc.), have been pursuing the policy of the bourgeoisie, and not the policy of fighting the bourgeoisie, not the policy of fighting fascism. The united front government will be a government of the workers' organisations, a government of the people's front, a government consisting of representatives of the political organisations of other classes which stand on a common platform with that of the workers' organisations to fight against the capitalist offensive, fascism and war. It will not be a government of normal times, but a government of the period of *political crisis.*

But the united front government will not be the government of the proletarian dictatorship; it *should*, however, be a government that must prepare for the establishment of the power of the working class. *It should be that.* But whether it will be so, or not, depends on a number of things, and primarily, on the solidarity of the working class, its fighting ability, its determination and readiness not to be satisfied with results achieved, but to push on

with its offensive against the ruling class right up to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

Is it essential for us to pass through the stage of the united front, or people's front, government in order to establish the government of proletarian dictatorship? No, it is not essential. Our tactics are not a cut and dried scheme into which we must artificially stick the whole development of the revolutionary struggle of the working class without consideration for the variety of its conditions and forms. On the whole, the tactical line of the Seventh Congress corresponds to the *relation of class forces in the present period*, it corresponds to the *present level of the movement and strength of the Communist Parties*, as it is to-day, and will be in the immediate future. But this relation of forces will change. To-morrow the Communist Parties may have greater opportunities to exercise direct influence on the masses, apart from the existing, old and obsolete organisations and parties. And this may call for another sharp change in tactics. Tactics may change, but the general line of the Communist International, *the course it is steering for the proletarian revolution, remains unchanged.*

## VII. A CONGRESS WHICH RALLIED THE FORCES OF THE COMMUNISTS ON THE BASIS OF THE CORRECT GENERAL LINE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL. A CONGRESS OF FRANK, BOLSHEVIK SELF-CRITICISM

The Seventh Congress confirmed the correctness of the general line of the Communist International. It was not the bourgeoisie, its scholars, its economists and its statesmen; it was not Social Democracy, its theoreticians and its politicians, who proved to be right in their estimation of the world situation and of the prospects of development of the capitalist world; it was the Communists—who employ the unexcelled method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in examining social phenomena—who proved to be right.

The bourgeois economists declared that an epoch of "eternal prosperity" had set in. The Social-Democrats talked about the epoch of "organised capitalism."

The Communists disagreed with this and said that since the World War of 1914-18 the capitalist world had entered into a period of general crisis.

Facts prove that the Communists were right.

Capitalist stabilisation has been established forever, asserted the bourgeois and Social-Democratic "scholars."

Stabilisation is relative; it is temporary and transient, retorted the Communists.

Facts proved that the Communists were right.

There will be no more crises. The capitalist world has entered the stage of non-crisis economy, was the forecast made by bourgeois and Social-Democratic science.

Under capitalism crises are inevitable, retorted the Communists.

The world economic crisis which broke out in 1929 proved that the Communists were right.

The capitalist world is entering a period of subsiding class antagonisms, of the gradual improvement of the material conditions of the working class and the masses of the toilers, of the establishment of "Socialism" by means of bourgeois democracy and social reforms—this is what the progressive bourgeois, and the reformists of all shades, thought.

The Communists thought differently. They said: the world is not marching towards the abatement, but towards the unprecedented intensification, of class antagonisms. If the working class does not tear itself away from the influence of reformism and come over to the position of the class struggle, its conditions, and

the conditions of all the toilers, will steadily grow worse under capitalism. Bourgeois democracy is not paving the way for Socialism, but for fascism, and it is abolishing all the social gains the working class achieved by many years of struggle.

Events of the last few years have proved that the Communists were right.

Kautsky said that in the epoch of "super-imperialism" the big states subordinate the weaker nations *economically*, and therefore there is no need for the former to wage wars. Imperialism becomes almost tame and peaceful.

To this the Communists replied: the imperialist stage of the development of capitalism is inseparably connected with the outbreak of new imperialist wars, more monstrous than any that have occurred up to now. If the proletariat is not able to overthrow the bourgeoisie, the Communists added, the bourgeoisie will drive the proletariat into the abyss of war.

Facts prove that the Communists, and not people of the type of Kautsky, were right. The Communists were right in the question of the proletarian revolution, in the question of the paths of development of the proletarian dictatorship, in the question of building Socialism in the U.S.S.R.; they were right on all the fundamental problems of the world working-class movement, which lay at the basis of the programme, strategy and tactics of the Communist International, and which determined its Leninist-Stalinist general line.

Does this mean that the Communists were infallible in applying this correct line to the concrete conditions of the working-class movement in the various countries? No, it does not mean that. We had many cases in which the correct line was distorted; these distortions were mainly of a sectarian character, and frustrated the Bolshevik mass policy of the Communist Parties.

The Seventh Congress struck hard at these distortions. There have not been many Congresses in the history of the Communist International at which there has been such stern Bolshevik self-criticism as there was at the Seventh Congress. It would be wrong to think that the Communists committed more mistakes in the period between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses than in any other period of the development of the Communist International. What is true is that the Communist Parties have grown a head taller, that they have learned to appraise the path of their struggle more critically, and to see more clearly the "Left-wing disorders" of their growing and adolescent stage.

The Seventh Congress revealed weaknesses in the Communist

movement which formerly the Communists failed to see, ignored. Take, for example, an ailment we suffer from such as the *mechanical* application of the experience of the Communist movement of one country to that of the Communist Parties in other countries. There is much here that we overlooked; we were unable to separate the tares from the wheat, and the "wheat" was the absolutely correct task of *internationalising* the experience of our movement. But, while ostensibly carrying out this necessary and proper task, we often approached the problems of our movement mechanically and imposed the same tasks upon the weak Communist Parties as we imposed upon the stronger Sections of the Communist International. Not infrequently, we failed to take into account the specific features of the movement in the various countries, its political level, and the degree of its revolutionary maturity. And from this grew up the "tares," the mistakes.

Or take the question of Communists working in the fascist mass organisations. The Communist International cannot be reproached with not giving timely instructions on this question. But these instructions were too general; they should have been worked out more concretely. We shall make no progress by merely repeating commonplaces about it being necessary to work in the fascist mass organisations. The principal question is: *How is this work to be carried on?* This is not an easy task. Here two dangers lurk for the Communists: the danger of being crushed by the enemy at the very outset, or the danger of their adapting themselves to the conditions to such a degree as to degenerate into liquidators. We have not much experience to go by in this work yet, and it is a difficult matter to sum it up *publicly*; for although this would help to train our cadres, it may disclose our methods of work to the enemy, and thus help him in his struggle against the Communists.

The Bolsheviks' experience of underground work under tsarism is extremely valuable, but it does not help to solve entirely the problems which now confront the Italian and German Communists, for example, who are working under conditions of exceptional terror. It must not be forgotten that fascism has another side besides the terrorist side; it has the side of social-demagogic, which stupid and incompetent tsarism did not have. It must not be forgotten that fascism learned from defeated tsarism how to prevent the Communists from "utilising legal possibilities," that it has surrounded its mass organisations with an espionage system of such wide ramifications as the tsarist

secret police never succeeded in organising. It must not be forgotten that the whole apparatus of the modern capitalist state is ever so much stronger than the state apparatus of the tsarist autocracy. The underground experience of our Party is not sufficient to meet all our requirements to-day.

And yet, mental laziness, and an inclination to adopt stereotyped forms, prevented us from penetrating more deeply to the core of the subject. Instead of trying to understand the specific situation in which the Communists in fascist countries have to work, we preferred to explain everything by the fact that the Communists failed to carry out decisions.

And for years this explanation for the failure of our mass work in the fascist countries was accepted without noticing that the very explanation itself had become stereotyped. At the Seventh Congress, Comrade Dimitrov thoroughly trounced a number of cut and dried schemes, and he trounced this one too.

The Communist Parties in the fascist countries, and the Italian and German comrades in particular, will have to rack their brains quite a bit to work out the appropriate forms of Bolshevik work in the fascist mass organisations. In order to achieve success in this work it will be necessary to draw a more strict distinction between the "legal" and illegal work of the Communist Parties in fascist countries; more decentralisation will have to be introduced so that the lower organisations may be less dependent upon the higher organisations, while at the same time, the underground leadership of the Party will have to exercise more effective control over the comrades who are carrying on "legal" work in the fascist mass organisations. Organisational forms must be devised by which to develop the initiative of rank-and-file engaged on open mass work; and cadres of "legal" workers in the revolutionary working-class movement must be created who must penetrate into the fascist mass organisations. In short, we must decipher the "Trojan horse" tactics referred to by Comrade Dimitrov. This work will give political training to a cohort of practical mass workers, of great practical revolutionaries, to whom will fall the great honour of overthrowing fascism.

The Congress also criticised our weaknesses in trade union work. On this question also the Communist Parties in the past have adopted excellent resolutions, but these have not been carried out. Why? Was it the evil intent of the Communists which prevented these resolutions from being carried out? Of course not.

The gulf between desire and deed was created because those

who drew up the resolutions paid little attention to the real possibilities of carrying them out. Often these resolutions were something in the nature of a collection of general instructions applicable to the most favourable conditions for carrying them out. But concrete reality was altogether different; it created difficulty after difficulty in the work of the Communists in the trade unions: the Communists were expelled from the trade unions, they were discharged from the factories, they were strangled by the noose of unemployment, etc.

The conditions under which these resolutions were drawn up changed, but people keep on repeating the same old words, and thus the gulf between word and deed became wider. This disorganised the Party workers, taught them to treat adopted resolutions with insufficient respect, weakened their determination to fight even for easier and more modest tasks.

How much talk has there been about the need for Communist fractions in the trade unions? And yet no progress was made because, by forming our own small unions, we kept the Communists away from the masses, doomed them to stew in their own juice, doomed them to work where complete unanimity reigned, where fractions were a pure formality and their meetings sheer waste of time.

Put the Communists where they will come into daily contact with masses who are not yet ours, where they will have to answer the arguments of our opponents in the presence of the masses, where they will learn to argue and to defend our position, where they will acutely feel the need for a preliminary discussion and agreement among themselves and their supporters in order to withstand the attacks of the reformist bureaucracy. If you do that you will not recognise them as the people whom to-day we accuse of not being able to work in the trade unions. In addition to all other advantages, trade union unity, for which the Communists are now fighting, has the advantage that it *creates the conditions* for the growth of our Communist cadres, for training real mass leaders.

But does this mean that in criticising sectarian mistakes the Seventh Congress underestimated the danger of Right opportunism? No, it does not, comrades.

Large masses of Social-Democratic workers are beginning to turn towards Communism. They will add fresh power to our movement. In a number of fascist countries, in Austria, for example, they have already given the Communist Party good cadres whose fighting qualities are not inferior to the original

Communist cadres. At the same time, we must not forget that the masses who are coming to Communism will not become Communists overnight. The complete elimination of Social-Democratic views requires time. The survivals of Social-Democratic ideology will continue for a time to burden the minds of the new Party members, and this increases the danger of Right opportunism.

This danger becomes all the more serious because we are on the eve of great shocks to the capitalist world, of a great turn in events, of big class battles, which people with insufficient political stamina and weak nerves will be unable to stand. Comrades, remember what Comrade Stalin told us about the fishermen who were caught in a storm. Some reefed their sails still closer, their boat cut through the waves, and they swept boldly forward in the teeth of the gale. Others, however, crouched in the bottom of their boat, covered their heads in fear and allowed themselves to be tossed about at the will of the waves. We want the Communist Parties to be fishermen of the Stalin school and not fishermen who fear the storm. That is why it is particularly necessary at the present time to increase our vigilance towards Right opportunism. Are there already fishermen of the Stalin type in the Parties of the Communist International? Yes, comrades, there are.

### VIII. A CONGRESS OF MATURE BOLSHEVIK CADRES

The Bolsheviks in the capitalist countries have given us immortal examples of heroism. John Scheer, August Lütgens, Fiete Schulze, Chu Chu-po, Sallai, Furst, Iwata, Yosimitsi, Watanaba, Massanosuke, Lutibrodsky—scores and hundreds like them—people who from the scaffold issue their last call to the masses and hurl their last challenge at the enemy. With head proudly raised they marched, and are marching to-day, to the scaffold, filled with love for the people, hatred for the enemy, and contempt for death. In the twilight of dawn in capitalist towns and villages one hears the muffled steps of men and women going to their death; and every day these muffled steps rouse millions, rouse them to a similarly indomitable and fearless struggle. When the as yet triumphant hounds and hogs of capital say to a rank-and-file German Communist whom they have tormented and beaten nearly to death: "We have knocked Communism out of your head," they hear the reply from almost numbed lips: "You have knocked it in more deeply." And this unknown hero of the German people is right. Torture and execution are knocking Communism deeper into the hearts and heads of men and women. And the love and confidence of the masses of the people towards the men and women of the Stalin stamp, towards those who are waging a life and death struggle against slavery and oppression, are growing and spreading all over the world.

The Communists have shown their mettle. They have shown that they cannot be exterminated any more than their class, its will to fight and to conquer, can be exterminated.

And day after day these people are mastering more and more the hidden secrets of Bolshevik science: the ability to establish strong, inseparable ties with the broadest masses; the ability to keep one's head at critical moments and quickly and independently find one's bearings even in the most difficult situation; the ability to combat vacillation and hesitation; the ability to observe Party rules and discipline.

And precisely because reliable Communist cadres have been and are growing up in the capitalist countries, the Congress very materially *changed the Communist International's method of leading its Sections*. The Congress emphasised the fact that the Executive Committee of the Communist International should concentrate more on working out the main political and tactical line, and that it should, as a rule, refrain from interfering in the internal organisational affairs of the Communist Parties. This

wise decision was not accidental; it was dictated by the fact that the Communist movement in the capitalist countries has become strong and bolshevised!

A Bolshevik, Stalin Guard has arisen in the lands of capital! And we are proud of the fact that from the ranks of this Stalin Guard in the capitalist countries has arisen a man who hurled his bold challenge at the enemy even while the executioner's axe was hovering over his head, a man who by his courage gave a powerful impetus to the anti-fascist movement all over the world—I refer to the people's tribune, Georgi Dimitrov. When this indomitable revolutionary rose to his full Bolshevik height in his passionate struggle against fascism, the whole world realised the strength of Communism, the strength of the Stalin cohorts. It was to him that the Congress entrusted the helm of the Comintern. In electing the leadership of the Communist International the Congress elected those who will pursue the new tactical line, not merely out of consideration for discipline, but because they are convinced it is a correct line; and because it was absolutely sure that with Georgi Dimitrov at the helm it will be a loyal, tried, steeled, Stalin leadership.

But the significance of the Bolshevik cadres which have grown up is not confined to organisational conclusions concerning the personnel of the leadership of the Communist International, or to the change in the methods of leadership. The existence of *strong Bolshevik cadres* is one of the *most important guarantees of the success of the Communist Parties in their struggle for the proletarian revolution*. The victory of the revolution depends not only on the objective conditions which facilitate it, but also on the men and women who make this revolution. It will be impossible to determine the prospects of our movement correctly if we do not take into account the state of the available cadres of the Communist Parties.

## IX. A CONGRESS OF GREAT PROSPECTS

The Seventh Congress indicated great prospects for the world working-class movement, prospects of battles and victories.

In this respect it met the requirements of the millions of workers who have tasted the bitter fruit of defeat, *viz.*, it has pointed to the way out of the *cul-de-sac* into which the policy of Social-Democracy has led them. It has shattered the Social-Democratic legends about the omnipotence of capital and the impotence of the workers. It has smashed the fatalistic view that the standard of living of the masses must inevitably be reduced during a crisis, that fascism must inevitably be victorious, that a new series of imperialist wars is inevitable, *i.e.*, that the triumph of the armed bourgeoisie and the defeat of the unarmed proletariat are inevitable.

The Congress, pointing to the experience of successful mass strikes in a number of capitalist countries, showed that even in the conditions of a crisis it is possible to hold up the capitalist offensive. Pointing to the living example of the anti-fascist struggle of the French proletariat, the Congress demonstrated to the whole of the international working class that by establishing a united workers' front, which grows into an anti-fascist people's front, it is not only possible to stand in the path of fascism, but even to start an offensive against it. In popularising the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. which is supported by the anti-war struggle of the international working class, the Congress showed that more than once it has been possible by the united efforts of the U.S.S.R. and the toilers in the capitalist countries to frustrate the bellicose plans of imperialist governments. And finally, the Congress showed that the growing might of the Land of Soviets, of the first proletarian state of the world working class, gives the toilers in the capitalist countries the assurance that they, too, have at their command an important material force with which to face the bourgeoisie which is arming against them.

The clear and distinct prospects outlined by the Seventh Congress are not those waiting passively for the "spontaneous" development of events, not the line of capitulation based on the expectation of the automatic collapse of the fascist dictatorship, but prospects of struggle with increasing chances of victory. This victory is inevitable; but the road to it may be *less or more* arduous for the toilers. Of all the paths to victory, however, the most arduous will be that of the continued split in the ranks of the working class, and inadequate activity of the toilers in the struggle against the ruling classes.

Even if the capitalist world succeeds in emerging from the present world economic crisis it will not remove the revolutionary prospects. Every improvement in the economic situation will be utilised by the working class in order to pass to the counter-offensive, in order to win back from capital their modest gains that were annulled by the bourgeoisie as a result of the world economic crisis. The proletariat will not become reconciled to the colonial level of existence, with the monstrous disfranchisement which the ruling classes have imposed upon it on the plea of saving capitalist economy from collapse. Everywhere a huge wave of strikes will break out which will serve as the starting point for great popular movements against the reign of starvation, poverty and fascist terror. The living, striking example of the growing well-being of the masses of the people in the U.S.S.R. will have a particularly strong effect under such conditions.

What can the ruling classes put up against this example? Capitalism in its fascist cloak? But the ruling class are greatly mistaken if they think that the establishment of the fascist dictatorship will take place in every capitalist country as smoothly as it took place in Germany. German fascism has upset the game of the fascists in other countries. By its bloody practices it has raised a wave of anger against fascism all over the world. The anti-fascist movement in France and the armed battles in Austria and Spain have shown the bourgeoisie in other countries that the attempt to establish the fascist dictatorship will meet with the stubborn resistance of the toilers. The bourgeoisie stands the risk of losing its head if it rushes headlong towards its goal. Its fight for fascism will be the starting point of great class battles which may end in the overthrow of capitalism.

At the same time, where the fascist dictatorship is already established, so much class hatred is accumulating against fascism that the revolutionary movement, even if its development encounters greater difficulties than in other countries, will assume the form of ruthless civil war.

Lenin wrote:

"The school of civil war does not leave the people unaffected. It is a harsh school. And its complete curriculum inevitably includes the victories of the counter-revolution, the debaucheries of enraged reactionaries, the savage punishments meted out by the old governments to the rebels, etc. . . . This school teaches the oppressed classes how to conduct civil war, how to bring about a victorious revolution; it concentrates in the masses of

present-day slaves the hatred which is always harboured by the downtrodden, dull, ignorant, slaves, and which leads those slaves who have become conscious of the shame of their slavery to great historic exploits.<sup>1</sup>

The bankruptcy of fascist policy is becoming more and more evident to those masses which supported the fascists before they came into power. The peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie are displaying increasing dissatisfaction with their position. A large section of the big bourgeoisie is alarmed by the approaching economic catastrophe. The social base of fascism is shrinking more and more. At the same time, the success of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. has been exercising, and will continue to exercise, a revolutionising influence, not only on the proletariat, but also on the petty-bourgeois masses which have been the social prop of fascism. Crises in the fascist dictatorship, like the Matteotti crisis in Italy and that of June 30 in Germany, are not only inevitable, but, on the basis of past experience, will be utilised more and more actively by the masses in order to strike a decisive blow against fascism. Never in history has terrorism saved regimes that were doomed to collapse.

And the Land of Soviets, against which German fascism intends to mobilise the whole capitalist world, will grow and become stronger, and will win the peoples to the side of Socialism in spite of the frenzied bourgeoisie. If the capitalist world leaves the Land of Soviets in peace, if it refrains from attacking it and allows it to develop for several years, this land, by its achievements, will convince millions of people all over the world of the advantages of Socialism over capitalism. It will transform the "peaceful" people who are outside of all politics into anti-capitalist revolutionaries; it will transform yesterday's opponents of Socialism into its ardent friends who will be willing to lay down their lives in order to achieve its triumph, it will attract to Socialism the best human minds, the flower of the nations and peoples, and the oppressed masses of all races and all colours.

Socialism would not be the great all-conquering idea that is being realised on one-sixth of the globe if it did not possess the mighty power of setting mankind in motion. And it is precisely because Socialism needs no wars for its triumph, that the world proletariat and its state, the U.S.S.R., are the most consistent

and sincere fighters for the cause of peace. And precisely because capitalism is doomed, the bourgeoisie is trying to save this system, which has become a shame and a curse to mankind, by new imperialist wars, and primarily by an attack on the Land of Socialism, the fatherland of the toilers, the U.S.S.R.

But an attack on the Land of Socialism will unleash the forces of the proletarian revolution. And, as Comrade Stalin has said, as a result of such a war the bourgeoisie will miss some of its governments. Let the capitalist world dig its own grave! The working class has no reason to be pessimistic about the future. It will fulfil its function of grave-digger of the capitalist system under any circumstances. And it was with this conviction that the whole of our Congress, the Congress of the impending victories of the working class, the Congress of preparation for these victories, was imbued.

The Seventh Congress laid down a distinct and clear course for the masses; it demonstrated the correctness of the line of the proletarian revolution. We have a world Communist Party which will pursue this course and carry out this line, i.e., the Communist International, the International of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. We have the guarantee that this course will be properly pursued and this line carried out in the General Staff of the Communist International, guided by its great steersman, Comrade Dimitrov. We have the guarantee of victory in the fact that the army of the toilers of all countries is being led by the great leader of all the exploited and oppressed, Comrade Stalin.

Long live the Seventh Congress of the Communist International!

Long live the great Stalin!

<sup>1</sup> *Inflammable Material in World Politics. Selected Works, Volume IV, p. 298.*

PAMPHLETS BY  
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